

LETTERS
FROM HEAVEN

CONSULTED.

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**BY JAMES O'KELLY.**  
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J. O. Atkinson.

TO THE READER.

WE are highly favoured with letters sent from heaven, even to the christian churches, to enlighten the world. They came from the seven Spirits, and the glorious person of our exalted King, the Lord Jesus, the faithful Witness, and true God! Here is wisdom; let him that readeth try to understand.

These letters are recorded or bound in heaven, as also on earth. They are never to suffer any change or revolution to the end of the world: wo to him that addeth thereto, or taketh ought therefrom! The sacred word is so fixed, and so well calculated by divine wisdom, that it completely serves for all nations and successive generations, till time shall be no more. Divine wisdom saw from the beginning how every nation and successive generation would proceed; yea. all the revolutions, customs, manners, divisions, subdivisions, all were foreseen; for the Lord foresees whatsoever cometh to pass, both good and evil, but decrees nothing but what is just, right and good. He seeth through all time and time-things. He suffers men to do wrong as far as

his wisdom will let, but no farther: and all this is exactly right according to circumstances and cases. He views through the divisibility of matter, and weighs all in equal scales. He suffers men to do wrong, as he did Adam; but Adam was justly punished, and so shall other rebels be. Here are national sins and practical wickedness amongst us; it is surely suffered for a while: but for all these things God will bring us into judgment, as these divine letters declare. But the word, even the royal standard, is set up for the churches and the people. The confused churches must rally under this standard before they will be primitive: for by this standard must we be judged at the last day. Therefore we will try to understand these precious letters, beginning at the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans.

LETTERS FROM HEAVEN

CONSULTED.



ROMANS.

CHAPTERS I, II.

PAUL declares himself to be a servant of Jesus Christ, called by him, separated as an apostle unto the gospel of God. Notice the speech. He writes to the saints, then in Rome, and to all saints, beloved of God, whose faith was spoken of abroad. Can faith be seen? Yes, by good works. He writes of a people, who, through vain philosophy, fleshly lusts and the devil, had fallen away below human, to brutality; professing themselves to be exceeding wise, they became fools!

The wise men of Greece and Rome, deemed Paul a babbler, a preacher of foolishness. Surely he would be ashamed to promulgate such doctrine in the great city of Rome! Paul boldly testifies, saying, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to the humble believer. Reader, notice—he calls it the gospel of God; and then he calls it the gospel of Christ, and the power of God, in delivering the sinner from the law of sin and death.

People who can see sin in others, and yet live in sin themselves, are inexcusable; for by condemning others they prove how they rebel against the light—as thousands now do. Men who are favoured with the gospel, have an advantage superior to that of dark nations; yet all are without excuse, for all have some light, and the true light; and if men improve that light, it can make a very gracious change in their souls, for that light is from the Saviour.

Let us now carefully attend to the doctrine of the rich grace of God in bearing with sinners, who sin the more because the Lord delays execution! Thus they despise the riches of his grace, and go on in sin, whereby they offend the law, which worketh wrath; and despising the gracious offers, they are said to be heaping up wrath against the great day of his wrath, when flames of fire shall try the feelings of miserable souls! Can this long forbearance be towards those who are said, by the clergy, to be the fixed elect number; or the non-elect, called reprobates? I have just stated the question; the reader may work it: and if you bring it out partial election and reprobation, then why is it said, they are without excuse?

CHAPTERS III, IV, V.

In a wonderful display of heavenly wisdom, our apostle proves the doctrine of justification by faith, and our situation in a natural state, in the third, fourth and fifth chapters. The law declares that none are righteous, not a just man upon earth; and by the deeds of the law no man can be justified: for the Levitical law was too weak; and the moral law is too strong, for it cannot put up with the smallest failure! Now then, if ever a sinner stands justified before God, it must be by the way of grace and faith, according to gospel order. Reader, follow me close, as I try to follow Paul, chapter iii. 23. &c. As all have sinned, being justified freely by his grace, which produceth faith, through the redemption that is in Jesus; that is to say, through faith in his blood. This gracious method of our justification is well authenticated, or witnessed, by the ceremonial law, the types, the high-priests, the bleeding sacrifices; as also foretold by the prophets. After a penitent believer is thus justified, he is deemed righteous before God; and here stands a long disputed point among preachers and authors. A thousand, perhaps, among the letter learned say, that the righteousness of a believer is not his, only as it is imputed his; but it is the very personal righteousness of the Lord Jesus imputed to the man or woman. For so it is written, "To declare *his* righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believes on Jesus." The interpretation appears to be this: that God is magnifying *his own* righteous conduct, in

justifying one whom he had before justly condemned; but as soon as the creature believes with his heart, he is exonerated from the curse. See chapter iv. What shall we say? How was our father Abraham justified? This might decide the dispute. God had revealed to Abraham, about nineteen hundred years before Christ's personal appearance, the very things that are now reported unto us by the gospel; how the Saviour was to come, and how sinners should be justified. Abraham saw it by faith, and rejoiced. Now then, Abraham believed God, and *it* was counted unto him for righteousness. The dispute turns on this point; this little kind of a neutral pronoun, *it*. If *it* means the righteousness of Christ, the author is quite ignorant; but if it signifies the man's faith imputed for righteousness, then we are enlightened. Christ's internal righteousness was the absolute perfection of the Father—his God-head; and as touching his personal conduct, it was a law, righteousness to perfection. Reader, look at the 5th verse; there it is spoken in plain terms, saying, "*This faith* is counted for righteousness." A created being could no more bear the righteousness of God, than a man could bear the weight of this ponderous globe. To suppose the great Father doth impute the righteousness of Jesus to a man, is to separate God and his Christ; which is a destructive idea. If any one had the righteousness of Christ counted his, he could stand in no need of intercession. But some people will have it so!

CHAPTER VI.

THE introduction is, What shall we say then? If we are saved by grace and not works, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! Our baptism into Christ, or christianity, solemnly binds us to a life of holy obedience to the gospel of God. As circumcision bound the Jews and their proselytes to obey the law, which, if they did not fulfil, their circumcision was of no profit: so it is by baptism. Jesus died unto sin; so do christians die with Christ to sin and the old Levitical law. As a death unto sin is essential, so is a life unto righteousness. This death is called a crucifixion, the old man is crucified. "I am crucified with Christ." So also we are buried with Christ; yet not personally in the water, as those who die on sea; nor does it signify being personally buried in the earth, nor in the

rock: these are figurative phrases. To be risen with Christ is also a spiritual resurrection. All this the converts in the beginning were taught, and in that faith they were baptized *with* water unto Christ; as those alive from the dead, they were to walk as new people. Reader, notice the 14th verse, saying, Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace. If my reader be a stranger to conversion, then art thou under the law, and of course under the dominion of sin, and therefore under the curse! But if thou be a professor, know thou, that a man cannot be a saint and a sinner at the same time! You may yield to sin, but sin cannot force a christian; you may give place to the devil, but if you resist him in Jesus's name, he flies! Look forward to the succeeding chapter and you will see more.

CHAPTER VII.

THIS section follows in regular succession, as corresponding with the one before, but is much more mysterious. Reader, try and get your mind passive, for the views before us relative to the contents of this chapter will differ from the opinion of many of our religious friends.

It is supposed by men of information, that this chapter is intended to designate the character of Paul, the holy apostle and christian. It cannot be. Inspired Paul wrote many solemn truths, hard for weak minds to understand. May the Lord give us light! Notice, let us take hold of the first link of the chain, and carefully follow on. First: To whom in particular is this subject addressed? To those who know the law. After gaining their attention, he proceeds by way of similitude, saying, The *law* hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth: so a woman is bound by the law of her husband, so long as he liveth; but if her husband die, she is free from his law, and hath a right to marry another man. Reader, can you see what the ingenious apostle is aiming at? Christians, ye are become dead to the old law, the church's old husband; that is now dead, and you are dead to the law; shadows are reflected, and the substance is come. You are married to Christ, who lives forever; he is your head and lawgiver, and you must be called by his name. Reader, keep up. Again, Paul told the Jewish converts, putting himself in also, how they felt when illu-

minated, what a fight of affliction they passed through before they were ingrafted into Christ. The Levitical law was too weak to clear the conscience; and the moral law was too strong to allow the least failing, but held the sinner as it were by the throat, saying, pay me what thou owest! This Paul had felt as well as others; a debtor and criminal, in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. These agonies are felt in regeneration, when passing from death to life, violently pressing through the narrow gate. No legal sacrifices can avail. Grace having changed the heart, the soul longs for rest; but so long as we depend on any thing to deliver except Christ, there we lie; so long as we are unborn, we are in the flesh, not in the spirit, sin reigns. A will to please God, but being under the law, the awakened soul cries out, when I would do good, here is evil; in the eye of the law I am constantly sinning, for sin has dominion over all people until they are translated. It is no more me, i. e. my inward man, not my will nor desire, but unsubdued lust that dwelleth in me and holds me captive. Being utterly unable to break his bonds, he vehemently exclaims and cries for help, saying, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? This is called the body of sin, chap. vi. This is the old man, that must be crucified with its lusts. Light begins to break into the soul; he thanks God a way is made through Jesus Christ, that he discovers help at hand. Here the travelling soul is delivered; and the next chapter tells the believer's experience.

CHAPTERS VIII, IX.

THE pure doctrine runs thus: There is no condemnation to the soul in Christ Jesus, who walks not after the flesh, but after the spirit. There was a great difference in the experience of a pious Jew under the old law, where there was a remembrance of sin once a year; therefore none were saved by legal sacrifices nor Jewish rites, no, nor external moral performances; but by the law of the spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus. Now the christian experience is, to be translated into a marvellous light, and feel Christ in him the hope of glory! This divine law of spirit and power, is the way the Lord justifies the humble soul, according to his own purpose, not man's.

As the eighth and ninth chapters treat largely on very

mysterious and interesting subjects, we may work on them both together.

My reader will find a mystery in the eighth chapter, to which I solicit his attention. Verse 9, &c. "If so be the spirit of *God* dwell in you." "If any man have not the spirit of *Christ*, he is none of his." "If *Christ* be in you,—the spirit is life, because of righteousness." "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up *Christ* from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by *his spirit* that *dwell*eth in you." The letter coming from above, we are bound to believe it; and so long as we do believe it we can never be Arians. "As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." John x. "My sheep hear my voice and follow me, and *I give* unto them eternal life." "All the Father hath are mine."

Verse 17. Here stands an exceeding promise; but the condition is, If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him.

Attend to the following mystery: The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. This creature is possessed of an earnest expectation, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God; because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God! The whole world is in travail. So do we, who have the comforts of the spirit; we wait for the redemption of our body. O for a light from the Lord! Man is part animal and part immortal; the brutal creatures are only animal, but all feel the sad effects of the fall. The inspired man of God viewed the state of things at the time he wrote, and foresaw many things that might follow. The creature, the human family, are subjected to a life of toil, trouble, sickness and death; yet have an impression called *hope*, or expectation of deliverance some way, or the world would be in desperation. The Lord spared the world for the thousands that would be born, and born again, that otherwise never would have been: and as life is desirable, all should live, and have an equal opportunity of happiness. They are not willing subjects to God naturally, but rather at enmity; yet sinners are obliged to be subject to providence, affliction and death. This is eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil

all our days. Had the Lord given the fallen family all good things here of earthly comforts, they would have been as Dives, had their good things here, and hell hereafter: and if all were evil, who could live?

The Jews were hoping for a Saviour, to deliver them from their enemies; the heathen oppressed nations, and slaves were groaning under oppressive men and devils; the philosophers were comforting the poor wretches with fields of carnal delight after death; moreover, there was a general expectation of a *deliverer* from present evil, of one called "the desire of all nations." When it speaks of the whole creation groaning in travail and pain, until now; this is the travail that man and beast have to pass through in this uneven world. The righteous are not so pure as to need no chastisement. One great deliverance shall be when the crown falls from the despot's head; when the white surplice, the black gown, the three-cornered caps, are all out of fashion, and the reverend clergy become the humble presbyters; it will effect such a change in church and state, that it may be called "a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." But at the general resurrection, when the creature is redeemed from corruption; when this ponderous earth and seas disburthen themselves, and the groans of brutes be heard no more; the holy Lord shall gather up his jewels, after purging his church—and where will the sinners appear?

Now comes on the doctrine of foreknowledge, predestination, the called, the justified, the glorified—saying, What shall we say to these things? Those gentlemen who are styled the reverend learned clergy, they and their churches, are taught and do teach their thousands of like faith, to consider themselves part of that select favoured number. It appears to us who can only speak broken English, that the apostle was writing a history respecting the rise and fall of the Jews, as a warning to the Gentile churches. For further proof I refer my reader to the tenth chapter of the epistle to the Corinthians. For an amicable settlement of this long dispute, men who can read our English Bible may trace the subject, and reduce it to a certainty who those favoured elect-people were. We may begin at the fall in Paradise, when the blessed seed was promised, and the virgin Mary predestinated. Before the flood, Cain and Abel in their families were greatly divided. The Lord kept

a chosen line of holy men in succession, to guard the sacred worship of the true God against Satan and his idolatrous worshippers. Those chosen men were such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, &c. After the flood, Shem was chosen, according to foreknowledge, rather than Japhet or Ham, whose posterity were idolators. In process of time God chose Abram according to foreknowledge; with him he covenanted, and made him the father of a great family. The next was the beloved Isaac. Isaac married Rebecca, and she had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. But foreknowledge elected Jacob to stand in the royal line; for Esau's posterity became bitter enemies to the people of God. Moreover, Esau and Jacob formed an allegory of the two dispensations. And it came to pass that Jacob had twelve sons born unto him, and they became great men, even patriarchs. These were *all* elected, and established in twelve tribes. From these twelve tribes came the great *elect* nation, the Jews. This nation was to be a holy people, conformed to the image of the holy Son of God; who according to the flesh was a Jew, and stood as the first-born among many brethren, who takes the government on his shoulder. To this illustrious nation pertained the adoption, the glory, the giving of the law; and of whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God, blessed for ever. Amen.

This nation was predestinated for great and wise purposes; they were called out of Egypt, were all baptized unto Moses in the sea and cloud, all drank of the spiritual rock; but by disobedience and unbelief, all did not obtain that promised rest. Nothing but sin can separate between God and the soul. Our Calvinist brethren consider themselves of the elect family, according to Romans; whereas the author considers that they have no lot nor part in the history. For behold, when we trace their pedigree, and inquire what tribe they are of, the secret is, they are the offspring of Japhet! the Gentiles, as they were called after this! The Jews were predestinarians, considering themselves as the only elect of God. But the Almighty would let them know that he would have mercy on whom he saw fit; and that he would harden such as Pharaoh, who would first resist the gracious impressions. He kept Pharaoh alive after his day of grace was passed, to make an example of him at the sea, to terrify the nations and encourage his people.

CHAPTER X.

THERE is no great difficulty in understanding our apostle in this section. Observe how Paul lamented the situation of the obstinate Jews, whose zeal was not according to knowledge; boasting of their family and performances, when God put no difference between Jews and Gentiles, for the same Lord is rich unto all who call upon him; for the promise is, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

But shall those pray to this Lord Christ in whom they do not believe? how shall they believe in a name they never heard? and how can they hear unless the Lord should send them preachers? O how we are favoured; if we die in unbelief, nations buried in darkness will rise in judgment against us! Dark nations will not be damned because they did not believe on the blessed name of Jesus, but for neglecting the light he gave them, and that light was Christ. But to Israel the Lord saith, All the day long have I stretched out my hands of mercy to a disobedient and gainsaying people.

The apostle's sorrow for his nation was so great, that he could even wish to be cut off, so they could be grafted in; to be deprived of membership in the church of God, which by the Jews was deemed a curse!

Here is an excellent apostolic faith of christian experience, viz. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Reader is it so with you?

Verse 17. Notice how faith cometh—by hearing the word of God. Friend, dost thou know this by a happy experience?

CHAPTER XI.

IN consulting this chapter, it will be necessary to observe four particular points. First, The apostle observed that God had not cast away all his elect whom he foreknew, but a remnant were saved by grace through faith. Secondly, That the Jews seemed to open a door for the Gentiles, who also were foreknown: and when the fullness of the Gentiles are brought in, it will awaken and provoke the Jews to

emulation; the vail will be taken away as their hearts turn to the Lord. When this cometh to pass, what will it be but life from the dead? The offended elder brother comes in, embraces his younger brother; all is sweet union, feeding on the fatted calf. Thirdly. The following is a solemn caution to the Gentile churches, when beholding the severity of God upon the Jews, his goodness towards the Gentiles, who by faith were elected and engrafted into Christ, and the old stock, partaking of the root and fatness. Now then let the Gentile churches be humble, if we grow proud, or high-minded, to think our election sure before we finish our race; if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee, but cut thee off! Notwithstanding these heavenly warnings, the cry is, "Ye cannot fall." Fourthly, Paul takes a view of what was revealed to him, and deeper things out of sight yet to come; but all God's works though mysterious are just and right. He exclaims, saying, O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

CHAPTERS XII, XIII.

WONDERFUL condescension! the Lord and Master beseeches his servants, and by the weight of his mercies, to follow his instructions, be sanctified and eternally saved! The ways and means laid down by his holy apostle are, first, after giving God your heart, then offer your active body, a living sacrifice; which is reasonable service, considering the love of Christ, who gave up his holy body to the most painful and shameful death, a sacrifice for sins not his own! Secondly, we are charged not to conform to the customs, modes and fashions of the people of this polluted world, but quite the reverse—topsy-turvy! Thirdly, By so doing in faith, you will happily prove what the depth of Christian perfection is. Paul also teaches christians to be sweetly connected in one man; not self-conceited, not high-minded; never render evil for evil, but good, and that will melt the feelings of an enemy as coals of fire.

CHAPTERS XIII, XIV, XV, XVI.

THERE appear to be no great difficulties in these chapters; a few observations may suffice.

First, The great King commands his people to be subject to the civil authority, for divine authority appointed it so to be. Magistrates bear the civil sword, to punish evil doers and protect those who do well.

In the fourteenth chapter, the church is directed to receive into her bosom humble desirous souls, though weak in faith, either under care or cure. People in those days had notions and difficulties to surmount before they were well established in the gospel order, as it reads: and so it may be now in other cases, before some desirous people can be fully persuaded to the scripture institution of the christian church." The same thread of discourse extends to the fifteenth chapter, where it is written, that such as are strong must bear the infirmities of the weak.

The sequel of this epistle is precious reading, but is not hard to be understood. The 17th verse of the last chapter should be particularly observed. If any man causes schisms or divisions, by doctrine contrary to the pure doctrine, disown him. Racers run for a prize, but the prize is never won until the runner comes through, that is, finishes his course.



I. CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTERS I, II, III.

THIS idolatrous city appeared to have been under the dominion of Satan; but the pure gospel and the power of God, even by the law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, freed many of their captivated souls, and translated them into the kingdom of God and Christ. A glorious church was erected on the sure foundation. After Satan found himself thus defeated, he studied the following stratagem, to act on some souls, partly carnal, and break their union, and it was so: some were for Paul, some for Apol-

los, &c. The apostle heard of it, and wrote what is already written. Paul did not utterly condemn; but charged them with being partly carnal, and walked like men; or at best, were mere babes for weakness. Friendly reader, mark the order of ministers in christian times. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, all are yours, said Paul; *we* don't decide. All the ministers were workers together with God, in any and every church, speaking as out of one mouth, teaching as the Lord commanded. Satan might have had this in view, to destroy the christian union, and get the preachers idolized. Thus it was that Paul thanked God he had baptized but two men, and one family or household, lest it should be said, "I baptized in mine own name." For when the Lord called Paul to be an apostle, he charged him to observe the Lord's supper; but made no mention of water baptism, for that was directed before in the great commission, saying, Go ye out into all the world, teach, preach, baptize in the new order, disciple them, then teach my laws. Paul knew it was an established ordinance; but if it divided, it was not suitable to that confused people at that time. Paul's great call was to preach the gospel, &c. The churches were greatly disturbed by half Jews, and philosophers. The Jews required a sign; the learned Greeks sought after worldly wisdom. The apostle observed, that though their wisdom discovered many wonders in God's creation, but never could arrive to the knowledge of God; but those who believed the gospel, found it to be the wisdom of God, and the power of God, to their soul's salvation. You see your calling, brethren, that not many of these learned Greeks, nor those prudent noble Jews, are called to the ministry; but Christ is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. This chain of doctrine is not accounted yours by imputation, but your whole redemption is by and from Christ.

In the second chapter, there are four particulars which will be noticed. First, Paul, though a learned philosopher and a wise Hebrew, yet was predetermined to hold no useless speculative disputes, but hold up the doctrine of Jesus, the true Messiah, who was crucified for the sins of the people.

Secondly, The apostle shows the wisdom he preaches, and teaches to experienced christians the wise plan of redemption, how the soul grows in grace, and a greater de-

gree of the knowledge of God in Christ, light, life and love, till sanctified in a greater degree, and preparing themselves for heaven.

Thirdly. Here the apostle drops a sentence, enough to make the heart of a sincere christian leap for joy. What, no eye ever saw in the highest revelation, nor ear ever heard reported under heaven, nor heart ever conceived in the deepest contemplation, what precious things God hath laid up for those who love him! O, my reader, can you forbear loving and serving such a master as the Lord Jesus?

Fourthly, The natural man is the unconverted man, and may study until death, but never be able to understand the things that make for his peace; by reason, the religion of Jesus is revealed religion.

Here stands a solemn charge to ministers to be humble, not puffed up with spiritual pride, in thinking, and being one more gifted than the other, and therefore must expect pre-eminence. But who made thee to differ? or what hast thou that thou didst not receive? This is the unclean episcopal spirit; therefore not of God.

CHAPTERS V, VI.

HERE is an apostolic charge to the church of Christ, to expel wicked people from her body. Did the apostle charge the church, or her pastor, or bishop? The answer is ready; it was the body, or church collectively. Paul the apostle did not exercise the power of an inferior kind of bishops, who could send a bull and expel any man, "though five hundred miles distant." The apostle directed that a church collectively, with her teachers (if any at hand), should judge. Where there are church courts, one above another, to try an offending brother as a state criminal, having no scripture authority, it designates that church to be a creature of the state. Moreover, ministers should not be a distinct body to themselves over the church, and make their own laws, &c. but all should be members one of another in the body, and subject to one Lord, as it was in scripture times. Read the orders. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, with due divine authority, to deliver such a one to Satan, that is, to put him back to Satan's territories, among the wicked. Moreover, in the apostles' days, such as brought scandal on the church, and were

justly expelled; if they were not given over by the Lord, they were frequently afflicted with bodily diseases, that fleshly lust might feel its just punishment. What have I to do (said Paul) with them that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? Them that are without God judgeth. Let civil people, even decent hearers, who utterly refuse to come under Christ's discipline, look at the word and examine its contents, viz. them that are without, God judgeth! See how far churches have wandered from divine orders, and do need a reform, a return to primitive purity. Ah! that is a true minister of God, who will sacrifice *rectory* to principle. This dreadful apostacy from the divine order, can never be too much lamented. These human inventions compose part of the hay, wood and stubble that the walls of Zion are partly built of, that will go with the chaff into unquenchable fire. But the pure word abideth for ever.

In looking over the sixth chapter, it appears that saints will judge men and angels. This seems to be a hard saying to be understood. May it not be construed after the following manner: After the Judge opens the books, or the given word, by the spirit and by the letter, under every dispensation, people, time, and times, privileges and opportunities, the whole of all our conduct brought to light, with every secret thought and intention, all judged agreeably to every divine attribute, and sentence passed by the Judge, the saints will see and judge it so correct, they may utter their approbation with a loud amen, saying, True and righteous are thy judgments, O Lord! As for the wicked, they feel the sentence just, but their mouths will be stopped by guilt. The way of the fallen angels, their horrid rebellion, and their just damnation, all will be illustrated as clear as noon. God will vindicate his justice, and display the riches of his grace.

As saints will judge and approve of their Lord's proceedings, surely they may judge small matters among their brethren; and not go to law before infidels, which thing is reproachful; better suffer some loss: what! those infidels, so little esteemed by you, though magistrates; as though there was not a wise man among you that could settle your disputes.

One observation more upon christian experience, verse 11, &c. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, sanctified, yea justified--how? By faith in the Lord Jesus,

and by the spirit of our God. Justification and sanctification are not one and the same thing.

CHAPTERS VII. VIII.

WHEN Paul wrote this letter, times were truly distressing among the persecuted christians; they requested the apostle's advice. In their present distress, his advice was, that those who were unmarried, should continue so, if they could be satisfied. Those who were married, let them cleave together, though one a christian and the other an infidel, and let the believer labour as they were unequally yoked, let the saint try to gain the sinner; but if the infidel would not live with the christian because of being a christian, let such an one depart, a brother or sister is not bound in such cases. Reader, take notice, that the little children of those unequally yoked parents are not to be considered as unclean infidels, but by the gospel law as federally clean; and of course should be dedicated to God in Christ's name, and that name all who are baptized put on.

Respecting the young virgins here spoken of, let it be first remembered, that girls under age did not engage themselves to any man without first consulting their parents, nor were they married without being "given in marriage." Therefore if the father refused to give his virgin daughter in marriage, he could do so; but if he discovered that he was too rigid, and behaved imprudent, and need should require, let them marry, said Paul, or do either way, it was not sinful.

The eighth chapter treats mostly on scrupulous niceties respecting meats, &c. that doth not concern us, only every brother ought to be careful not to offend each other in eating or drinking, as you may read. You who are deep in gospel liberties may lawfully do that which another views wrong; but emboldened by your conduct, he does the same, and to him it is sin.

CHAPTERS IX, X.

THE man of God here defends his character as a true man and an apostle; for he had seen the Lord Jesus, had heard his voice, and received his commission verbally from him; moreover, the Lord had added many seals to his mi-

nistry. He shows that ministers have a right to receive a necessary support, while they sacrifice their time and strength for the salvation of souls. He shows the propriety of this order by corresponding doctrine: that the soldier is to be supported by the public; the planter and dresser of the vineyard, to be partakers of the benefits arising therefrom; the labouring ox that treadeth out the small grain, let him bite as he goes. Although this is the duty of all the members of a civilized christian nation; yet if this duty in supporting the gospel should be enforced by civil authority, why not every other duty also? A minister of Jesus Christ is a steward; and it is required of stewards to be faithful, money or no money. Wo be to those who are called to the ministry, if they refuse; and cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully!

In the tenth chapter, the apostle exhorts the believer not to be ignorant respecting the danger of falling away; but take warning by a former elected people, who by faith passed through the Red Sea, so called because it washed the banks of Edom, or red. They passed by faith; they all drank of the spiritual rock; they were all baptised unto Moses, or his order. How much like national baptism to Christ, which forms a christendom. Those Jews were not immersed; but after this they displeased the Lord so highly that he destroyed them. These things are recorded for our examples; that christians may be guarded against evil, lest we fall short of the promised rest. These things are recorded for our admonition; therefore you who think you stand shure, take heed lest you fall. So the chapter goes on with exhortations and caution: never once saying, ye cannot fall!

CHAPTERS XI, XII.

THE holy apostle instructs the christians to observe decency and order in the house of God. That the sexes should distinguish themselves, both in dress and deportment. Long hair is an ornament to women, but not to men. God is order itself, and delights in order. Holy invisible angels attend the solemn assembly of pious worshippers perhaps, especially at the holy supper. The abuse of the holy communion, as you read, brought heavy judgments on some of the Corinthians. The apostle's awful sentence, of eating and drinking condemnation to themselves, by their carnal

gross manner of proceeding, keeps some sincere disciples from the Lord's table. But let them read over the character of those people whom Paul alluded to. Followers of Jesus, weak or strong in the faith, whose hope is in the Lord and not in themselves, whose hearts are sincere, who most heartily receive Christ Jesus the Lord, as teacher, saviour, lord and master, and willingly can not only give God their heart, but their body a living sacrifice to God; let them discern that the bread and wine thus consecrated, which represents the body and blood of Jesus, is to be received by faith, spiritually, to feed our souls and not the body. Therefore, let sincere disciples examine themselves, and come; observing the Master's word, "drink ye all of it."

In the twelfth chapter the contents appear to be as follows: The church in the beginning did constitute one body of Jews and Gentiles, male and female, bond and free. They were wrought upon by one Spirit, in various operations. Being baptised with water, they became nominal public christians. But those who were born from above and inwardly washed by the Word, were baptised by the Spirit into fellowship with God and his people, and were christians indeed, by having Christ within as well as put on. This appears to show quite plain the intention of baptism, to form a union external and internal; one the sign—but to prefer the apostle's phrase we will say, one is the figure, the other the essential. This should be decided by the rules of syntax and analogy; and to make use of the above observations, the mode of baptism will appear to be affusion, if there be no private interpretation. Prophets we have none, for they are not needed, they have said all that is necessary to the end. Myracles have ceased; apostles are gone home. Observe, in Paul's day, bishops over elders, I could venture to aver, were not born, as some of themselves have confessed. The elders and deacons, with gifted chief men among the brethren, could teach, and help in keeping order, and were all by divine appointment members in the same body, in subjection to the divine government. Reader, if you or your proxy will fairly prove by the gospel laws, that these sayings of ours are false assertions, let them be refuted.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE evidence of things not seen with the eyes of flesh, yet realized through these opaque bodies, bringing home to the mind those things which are promised to the faithful followers of our Lord, are truly delightful; but when the perfect light is come, these dull views will be done away. In this section the apostle extols charity as the most excellent of all spiritual gifts and graces; by reason, learning, tongues, eloquence, and seeming charity, by giving all you have to the poor, yea, you may be a bigot to an opinion, even to burning, and if charity be wanting, it will be out of one fire into a greater. Now we will examine the fruits of charity. Reader, mark well, and mind if you are in possession of this inestimable jewel. First, Charity will suffer wrong and long; yet be kind to the aggressor in need. Secondly, Charity does not brag nor boast, but is meek and lowly. Thirdly, Charity desireth the happiness of others as well as her own, is not inclined to be suspicious, thinketh no evil of any one. Fourthly, Charity rejoiceth in the truth, believeth all the scripture, hopeth in the promises in the most dangerous times. All other things, yea, friends may fail, but charity, which is the love of God in the soul; hold that sacred, and you will be supported through fire and water; it was this that supported Daniel in the den of lions, the three champions in the flames of fire, martyrs at the stake, &c. Faith is a great thing, and hope is like an anchor; but these will cease, when love will rise higher and higher in glory, and have no end.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT is now, has been in the days of yore. Our reverend clergy boast of their learning, and rather despise preachers who are uncanonical, and set them on the left hand as naughts. It was somewhat so among the disciples in the new church in the city of Corinth. Men of different tongues were puffed up, and boasted. The apostle chid them, and told them that the teachers were greater than they. The apostle observed, that he could speak with more tongues than they all, or any of them; but he chose to speak in the language of his hearers, that was best for their

edification; and pray in a tongue that the people could say amen. All creatures, birds and beasts, have voices in which there is meaning, and they understand each other. Let us leave the decision to the wise man Solomon; his answer is, "He that winneth souls is wise." Those classical gentlemen are qualified to preach in the Latin and Greek churches; but to exhibit to us in Greek and Latin, we must have an interpreter. Languages may be useful to young men who intend to study law or physic, by reason the classics have made it a rule to mix their exhibitions; and to throw in a Latin phrase once in a while to show us who they are. Surely to understand the dead languages is useful; but, among us, it is merely ornamental, and raises young men to be popular. A very popular and very learned doctor, some weeks since, expressed himself after the following manner: First, that one among the best physicians he ever knew, was only an English scholar; and then added, the time is not far distant, &c. signifying it would be thought less of here. Yet learning is desirable, and very useful to any nation, if honestly and rightly improved: yet it gives bad men great advantages to prey upon the common people, both in church and state. Read Simson.

CHAPTER XV.

AN error had crept into the church, saying, there can be no resurrection of the body. how can it be? Paul raised powerful and logical arguments in favour of the resurrection, saying, thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; the same grain is seen no more, but God giveth it a body: so it will be in the resurrection, we shall have this natural body no more, but our bodies in the resurrection will be spiritual. Our Lord's resurrection is the cause and effectual power of our resurrection, both of body and soul. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. If Christ be not risen, then those who have died in the faith, are perished! Those baptised in his name, under a hope of enjoying him for ever, are ruined; they were baptised for a dead Christ! But Christ is risen, as testified by five hundred witnesses.

After the day of judgment Christ will no longer act as intercessor, but be altogether God with his people; sinners will be finally lost, the way shut; saints finally saved, and

no more need intercession. From thence saints can never fall, and sinners can never rise.

Reader, pay attention to an important text, verse 22d, and try to understand it. If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed, or excommunicated from Christ's church now, and finally when the Lord cometh. Now what is the difference in loving God, and loving Jesus? It is all one and the same.



II. CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTERS I, II, III.

THE dear apostle and his fellow labourers struggled through reproaches, wants, and woes, but never left the work. Paul encouraged the brethren to endure like good soldiers, and help together in prayer. Christians, mind the example. Their rejoicing was from the testimony of a pure conscience, that in the sweet simplicity of the gospel they had their conversation, verse 12.

Chapter ii. 15, 16. All true ministers, who exhibit pure truth, they will be the savour of life to some, but of death to others. This gospel will be preached to all nations and people, and will appear as a witness to all nations. Note, if there be unconditional elects, previous to faith and conversion, what witness will the gospel be to them? And if others are, by a certain decree, whether a law-decree or a gospel-decree, left non-elect, what can the gospel witness against them?

In the third chapter, Paul shows how much more glorious is the new dispensation than the old. The glorious shekina, or emanation, caused the face of Moses to shine so glorious, that he had to wear a vail when he first came down from the mountain, so that the people could stand before him to hear the word of the Lord exhibited. There remaineth a vail on the hearts of the unbelieving Jews to this day: but when they turn to the Lord that vail will be taken away, and the glorious light of the gospel will shine unto them. Let a christian who is made free by the Spirit, carefully be led by its impressions, and it will change him from glory to glory.

CHAPTER IV.

IN this chapter about six particular heads of doctrine may suffice. First, concerning priestcraft. There were troublesome teachers from among the Jews and the philosophers, who handled the word of God deceitfully. Have we any such now? Secondly, The primitive ministers preached Christ Jesus the Lord; and where is there any Lord God besides? They held themselves servants of the church and Christ the Lord; therefore, the people who could not see into the gospel plan of salvation, were blinded by Satan and the world, and were, and all such are, in imminent danger. Thirdly, The experience of the christian is, God who commanded the light to shine in creation, doth cause the light of life to shine in every convert's heart. Fourthly, Here we have a sure confirmation that the old and new Testaments came from heaven through a pure channel; for the same Spirit by which the prophets spake, the apostles spake; and that was the Spirit of Christ. Therefore God and Christ are one. Fifthly, All things we see with our natural eyes are temporal, changeable, and perishable; but the things that we read of, hear of in the other world, whether good or evil, are eternal, and therefore unchangeable, even hell's torments and heaven's joys. Reader, mind how you conduct yourself. Sixthly, The heaviest affliction that men and devils can invent, and were you to live under them one century, it might be said with propriety, all these are light and short compared to the damnation of hell! O, reader, reform and pray.

CHAPTER V.

HERE we read the experience and great assurance that holy christians do enjoy this side of heaven; also the certainty of the happy soul, when it leaves this body, of its going directly to the Lord Christ. The apostle saith, We know we have a place eternal in the heavens; for we walk by faith. The faith Paul designates, works by love, and purifies the heart. It is God who wrought this for us, and in us, who hath given unto us his Spirit. While we who are in such a blessed state, while at home in the body are absent from the Lord, Let us follow the chain. But let us la-

hour that we may be always ready, for we shall be judged by the evidence of our works at the last day. We must live in Christ, and die in the Lord: the proof is, we are new creatures. We gather from this chapter, that Jesus died for all; and if so, all were dead. All who? what, all the elect? No: all sinners; for God in the humanity, when bleeding on the cross, reconciled the world to himself on gospel terms, for law and gospel must be reconciled. Now then, the ministers exclaim, O sinners, (not elects), God in Christ beseeches, Christ in God prays you to be reconciled to your gracious God in Christ on gospel terms; no forcing. Shall the offended Judge beseech the criminal, and he refuse? what must be the consequence? O, reader, how do you feel!

CHAPTERS VI, VII.

HERE is divine instruction to young people, who profess to be the disciples of Christ. For a christian to marry an infidel, is an abomination. For a convert to marry an ungodly sinner, is a very unequal yoke, and dangerous, especially on the woman's side, if she be a convert or a seeker; for she is to be under the law of her husband, who has no taste for religion. She must please her God and her husband, which is like serving two masters. The Jews thought it reproachful for their women not to marry; but Paul the christian recommends it, for such as can continue in honour.

In the seventh chapter we have the nature and fruits of repentance fairly stated. It arises from a conviction of the destructive and diabolical nature of sin. He sorrows after a heart-felt godly sort, considering how sin hath wrought his ruin, and provoked so holy, so good a God, that has yet spared the rebel; and while he views a blessed bleeding Saviour whom his sins had pierced, together with the forbearance of God, he mourns and repents. This godly sorrow, wrought by the Spirit, worketh life unto salvation. He clears himself from vain company and their snares; he has a holy indignation against sin and Satan; behold he prayeth! and vehemently thirsteth after the living God; and zealously seeks till he finds. Now, saith the apostle, seeing we have such promises of future happiness, let us labour by faith to be qualified to receive them, by cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may

perfect holiness in the fear of God. O, my readers, this is the proper preparation to meet our God.

CHAPTERS VIII, IX, X, XI, XII.

HERE we are exhorted to bestow charity on the poor suffering brethren, and be moved or excited by the great charity of the blessed Saviour, who possessed heaven with all its glory, the world below with all its wealth, ease and honour; the earth and seas and all are his; yet for our sakes he became poor, having no place as it were to lay his head! Through this wonderful condescension he purchased eternal life for us, together with riches, honour and immortality, and made us heirs and joint heirs with himself for ever. How much like Satan must he be, who in no degree loves the Lord Jesus!

Notice the 23d verse. The itinerant preachers who laboured with Paul, such as Timothy, Titus and others, were not installed, but travellers and messengers of the churches, doing the work of evangelists, preaching, teaching, and carrying the apostles' letters: they were said to be the glory of Christ, or the christian cause. Holy young men, who preach by precept or example; who hold their integrity, and deny themselves wives and established salaries; satisfied with a little necessary supply, and that freely given and thankfully received; till they learn like Paul to know to abound, and sometimes suffer need; and still go on, until they blossom for the grave: such are the most honorable, or among the most respectable men in this world.

The apostle's revelation to the third heaven, we can read. The thorn in the flesh, to prevent spiritual pride, consisted in bodily afflictions, fiery temptations, and persecutions. He prayed to the Lord to remove them; the answer was, My grace is sufficient. This promise is for all his praying faithful people. Paul defends himself against those messengers of Satan, false apostles; for Satan can form himself into the appearance of an angel of light.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE brethren being corrupted by those evil messengers, who persuaded them that Paul was no apostle, and nearly

overthrew the faith of some; the apostle exhorted them to examine themselves, to see if they were yet in the faith, and not reprobates. Let all of us also examine ourselves daily.

GALATIANS.

As there appears to be no dark saying in this letter, a few necessary remarks on the whole may suffice.

The apostle introduces himself to his Galatian brethren as to those who were in great disorder. He reminds them of his rise and progress as an apostle among them; and wonders that people so enlightened by the pure gospel, should be so soon turned. You received the Spirit by the faith of the gospel, said he, and not by the ceremonial law; thus you began in the Spirit, and ran well for a while, and ended in the flesh. He argues logically in showing the nature of the old law, and the gospel; how Abraham was justified by faith in the promised seed, and we christians of every nation, are the covenanted children of Abraham, by faith in Christ Jesus.

Those ministers who made the schism, and set the minds of the disciples against Paul, were what are called false apostles. They were learned, zealous men, and spake with great animation, whereby they greatly affected the brethren. Paul asked them if they counted him their enemy because he had told them the truth? They loved Paul recently, and most dearly; they even received him as an angel of God, and would, if possible, have given him their very eyes! Where, said he, is the blessedness you spoke of? The apostle wished those false teachers who troubled the churches, were even cut off—expelled. Had not he power to cut them off? This power appears to have rested in the church collectively, in scripture times. Paul sent out no bulls. He exhorts his faithful brethren to stand fast; though dead, he speaks the same to us. Paul highly approved of zeal, so it be in the truth.

Jerusalem above is the great glorious church, and she is free, and is the true mother of the gospel church below; by reason the primitive church did come down from heaven.

So John the baptist preached, saying, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." That the kingdom of glory is the mother of the primitive church below; observe,

1. My kingdom is not of his world, saith the King: take notice.

2. The new Jerusalem came down from God out of heaven: so saith the apostle John.

3. The laws of the old kingdom were from heaven. See Dan. ix. 9. We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in *his laws*, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. This is certain.

Listen, O, listen, and hear what a holy angel just from heaven said to John, Rev. xxii. 9. "I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book." We christians have *one* law giver, who is able to save, and destroy. James iv. 12. We are under the law of Christ. Paul: We establish the law. So then, the true church is an established church by law; but the law is suitable to the church, for it came down from heaven. Add not to the word, says the prophet.

In the sequel of Paul to the Galatians, he breathes the spirit of a man of God; he exhorts his friends to hold fast, and press on. He travails in birth a second time for his persecutors, with his usual prayer, The grace and love of God be with you all. Amen.

EPHESIANS.

CHAPTER I.

HERE the reader will enter into mysteries respecting the subject of dispute about foreknowledge, decrees, &c. Before the foundation of the world he knew his works. Known unto God are all his works, past, present and future. He is not only infinitely wise, but he is wisdom itself; for divine wisdom is essential to his eternal existence. He must, therefore, be possessed of all knowledge, (as we talk) past, present and to come; but with him it is all present, by reason he fills every point in duration. Let David speak, Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot at-

tain it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, all thy wrath is there; if I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth or sea, thy right hand will hold me. In him we move. He seeth through the divisibility of matter. He speaks of things before they come to pass, as though they were. He eternally saw all the fluctuating scenes of time. He decreed to give the ruined world a Saviour, and therefore he is said to be a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. According to infinite knowledge, he decreed, predestinated, and marked out his generation according to the flesh, which fixed the Jews an elect nation, for the purpose that the eternal Jesus should be the first born among many brethren, as having the pre-eminence. Thus the Jews (before the Gentiles were called) were his people. But the scriptures foresaw and foretold, that the Gentiles would be in time the Lord's elect; therefore the gospel was preached to Abraham, when his name was enlarged from Abram to Abraham, according to his good will and the glory of his grace. Beware how you draw your calculations from God's foreknowledge, and confound not his foreknowledge with his righteous decrees. Justice and judgment supports his throne: mercy and truth goes before. He that believes and obeys the truth, will obtain mercy; but no people need ever expect mercy, unless they believe, obey, know the truth, and keep it.

God foresaw that the Jews would reject Christ, but the Gentiles would receive him; therefore, according to his knowledge and the people's conduct, so the Lord wisely, justly and mercifully predetermined. So then, they who were not his, became his people, even his elected ecclesia! True and righteous is he, and so his works must be. The natural man, with his innate ideas, argues thus: As God is all-wise and all-powerful, why doth he suffer these evils to be done by men? Answer, God is goodness itself, and abhors moral evils, yet the scripture calls it his long forbearance, which proves man's freedom beyond contradiction. We should endeavour to understand the noble order of our creation and first situation. Man was created in the likeness, and holy image of God; and although we have departed from original order, we retain some likeness of our Maker, seeing we are intelligences. Were God to take

away our freedom of choice, he would break the order of our creation. Were our Lord to act absolutely, there could be no use for law and government. Man hath life and death set before him; blessing and cursing; and is directed to choose life, but is not forced into God's service.

CHAPTERS II, III.

BELIEVERS are quickened, who were dead in sin; were these the elect, or reprobates? Jews and Gentiles in Christ were all one; built upon the testimony of prophets and apostles. The apostle's prayer is, that christians may comprehend what the breadth, length, depth and height of pure christian religion is.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST, look at the union which ought to subsist in the church of God and Christ, viz. one body, united by one Spirit. To illustrate the above assertion, the Spirit that thus unites, is the Spirit that enlightens and draws us home to God, produceth the new birth, bears witness with the believer's spirit, and then seals him. Is this the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of Christ? If thou canst, tell. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; and there is but one Holy Spirit. Doth not the Arian's faith waver at this stumbling block? The apostle saith, one faith, that is, one pure faith, looking to Jesus as their one Lord God; a faith that works by love, purifies the heart, proves itself by a holy obedient life, and overcometh the world. This faith is accompanied with a comfortable hope of glory. There is also one baptism. Note; pure faith, a reasonable scripture hope, and divine love, are all essentials; we cannot be saved without these. Now, shall we consider water baptism in any mode to be essential? God forbid that we should so far be deceived. It is said the baptists have put away spiritual baptism altogether.

In this fourth chapter we read of our Lord's ascension to the highest heavens (from whence he descended), even to that exalted state of glory he had before the world was. Here men who mean well may stumble and be broken, by considering the Lord in glory as he was when weeping over

Jerusalem in the days of his flesh. O friendly reader, look on the two last verses of the 24th Psalm; fail not.

CHAPTERS V, VI.

THE few remarks necessary to be made on the close of this letter may be as follows, with a pressing exhortation to be close followers of God, as a family of dear loving children. Who can show the difference between the followers of God and the followers of Christ?

How shall we understand this saying, that he gave himself a sacrifice to God? Reader, take heed how you believe. It is written in the scriptures of truth, that Christ was put to death in the flesh; he bore our sins in *his own* body on the tree. His body. Paul? Who was *he* who gave *his* body? Moreover, who and where was that God to whom he made the sacrifice? Mind, reader, here are holy and interesting mysteries. It is written, God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. This was the Godhead of Christ, who reconciled the world to himself, by his own body. He purchased us with *his* own blood. So it stands unshaken, God and Christ are *one*, in spite of antichristian heresies. It behoved Christ to be like unto us men; therefore he possessed a body, a soul, which was the Deity or *Divino*; and his Spirit was and is the divine operation, that enlightens and quickens the believer's soul. Were his soul a human soul, its operation would never produce in us the new birth.

Read how pure the church must be before she enters into glory. No flesh spots; no worldly blemish; no wrinkles of a decay in the life of religion. Brother, if you believe these sacred truths, let us see your faith. &c.

Mark well how the apostle argues relative duties; read and obey them. O, how little these things are regarded. What shall we answer the Judge, when the books are opened? That duty of masters, servants, and slaves. If I should enter into the subject of slaves, it would swell to a history, and would lead me off my subject. This I will say, we are bound to do in every station of life, as we would be done by. We have but few sober minds in America, but sees, knows, and feels, that our negro slavery is as far from right, as a banditti of robbers are from honour and honesty. But the difficulty lies in the proper method of its extirpation. A christian, who is merciful to his slaves, perhaps is

not so criminal as he that is in the spirit of it. If any man wishes to see slavery opened to the light, let him read Thomas Clarkson's essay on Slavery. Do read it.

Paul closes his letter to the Ephesians with, Peace be to the brethren.

PHILIPPIANS.

THE Philippians were blessed and orderly christians; obedient to divine instructions, not only when Paul was with them, but more so when he was from them. Their faith and virtue was talked of, far and wide. This was a proof that the good Spirit worked in them; *their* work was to act from those divine impressions, in working out their salvation with awe, &c. Some christians say, where God begins a good work in the soul, he surely will finish it. This leaves the creature nothing to do; but the truth shows how man may begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh. Others may apologise, that as they are not religious they cannot begin a work of grace in their poor dead souls, and God hath not began it. To this impertinent speech we may answer, God has often knocked at your door for entrance, but you have refused and quenched the light, and resisted the Holy Spirit. God strives graciously, but not by force. What was done to the man who received a talent, but never improved it? He was cast into perdition!

The Philippians were kind to their ministers, who had no settled salaries. The conversation of christians should be such as adorns their profession. Paul had a desire to depart and be with Christ; which proves that the good soul, when it departs this life, ascends swiftly to Christ in glory. What a joy it is to holy ministers to see the holy brethren growing in grace. There is great consolation in Christ and society; there is great comfort in the life of love and christian fellowship. Paul taught the brethren to believe that the name of Jesus was above every name in heaven and on earth; and that all should bow the knee and worship the divine Saviour, the God Man!

The apostle warned the former brethren, and he warns us, to beware of false teachers. We have the blessed doc-

trine of perfection wrote by Paul, and the way to attain it. First, we must believe in the doctrine, and that we are bound to seek after it; or we shall not persevere, and of course must fall back. The way is, to follow after higher attainments of light, faith and love. But, nevertheless, you must walk by the same rule, mind the same thing, walk by faith in a holy obedient life. The rule you are to walk by is even the word of God. Turn neither to the right, nor to the left; ponder the path of thy feet, look straight before you; and by happy experience you will know, that your way will shine brighter and brighter to the perfect day. Will you seek after it?

Paul concluded his letter to his much beloved Philippians, as your author does to his brethren: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

COLOSSIANS.

Colosse was a city of Phrygia. This church was principally raised under the ministry of Epaphras, a faithful brother, who brought the glad tidings to Paul, who wrote to them this epistle, in which he styles them saints and faithful brethren in Christ. They heard, and we have heard, in the word of a pure gospel, of the pleasure and treasure laid up in heaven for such saints. So far as we understand, believe, experience and obey the apostle's writings, so far we are orthodox christians, independant of human traditions, marching on towards heaven.

In verses 13, &c. the doctrine of redemption is expressed in plain language. We have redemption (how?) through his blood, (what is it?) even the forgiveness of sins! Reader, do you understand this? Look here, the visible Christ was the express image, in beauty, purity, wisdom and power, of the invisible God. He is called the first-born of every creature, and the first-born from the dead; here, we suppose, it alludes to the resurrection. See the type in the days of yore; the first born son in a family had the pre-eminence, and acted as chaplain in the family. Esau sold his birth-right, and he is called profane Esau! Christ is the creator of the creatures; they were created by him and

for him; and he is before all things. He was, by divine appointment, a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, which answered for Adam's justification, and of course atoned for the sin of the world. There could be no difference in the unborn race; else Adam's soul was in part elect, and the other part reprobate! Impossible!

Christ being the head of his church, therefore as the first-born, he must have the pre-eminence; for all divine fulness was in him. God called Ephraim his first-born. Jer. xxxi. 9. David is said to be the first-born of kings. Psal. lxxviii. 27. The christians were, and they still are, warned to take care of innovations, false doctrines, and vain philosophy, which corrupted the churches. Teachers who before were Jews, yet fond of their old ordinances, called the rudiments of the old church, as the first principles at the introducing of the gospel; such as Jewish baptisms, &c. Just look, Rom. vi. Jews and Gentiles were fond of old human traditions, even from Adam, who told his children, and children's children, long before Moses, concerning the fall and the promised seed. It went through so many unclean hands, that only a few dark ideas of truth remained; but they could add, and invent, which the philosophers of different nations did abundantly. Paul did not condemn true philosophy, for his mind was no stranger to it; but vain inventions. The philosophers of all nations had their notions, figures and allegories, concerning the Supreme; indeed they had some dark ideas of what is called a Trinity. By viewing the creation, they read the glorious attributes of Deus, by which they gave names to three invisible powers. To the great power they gave the name of *Oromazes*, Unknown. Some of them admitted another great one, who was expected as the desire of all nations, so called. Some supposed him to be a God, but not equal; him they called *Mythras*. Some thought *Mythras* was equal, eternal; others said no, but the production of his power. Others supposed *Mythras* was a middle God, for feeling, and believed to be an immaterial substance, and also a deity; his name was *Conductor*. Such were their gross absurdities. Others were wicked deceivers, who aimed at the downfall of Zion. Our apostle holds up Christ as our only one Lord God, and we are complete in him. Those who will follow the Gentile philosophers before the holy apostles, are as men bewitched.

Let us endeavour to understand how baptism succeeded circumcision. Note, the baptism of John decreased, and died at Pentecost; therefore is not the baptism of the new testament saints. Now, as christians, set your affections on things above, where Christ your life is; mortify the remains of carnal strugglings. We are fighting for life and liberty, and running for a prize. Keep that in view.

Look well to the 16th verse. See the apostle's rules of society, which were ordered to be read in all the churches. These rules we have, and need no other. The apostle closes his letter with pure instructions and prayer. Amen.



I. THESSALONIANS.

LET us make a few remarks on this first letter. It gives thanks to God for the conversion of so many infidels from idolatry to christianity. The apostle had great faith in that people. What a pleasure it is to a minister of Christ to see the Lord's people in sweet fellowship with God and each other, walking as becometh the gospel of Christ. Paul reminds them how they laboured with them by pure doctrines and holy examples, but with much contention.

The 14th verse, second chapter, should be noticed. The first christian church was planted in Jerusalem; and the faith and order of that church was the pattern for all the Gentile churches: for the law went out from Zion, and the word from Jerusalem.

Notice the 13th verse of the second chapter. These people received the word from the letters and from the lips of the preachers, not as the words of man, but as from God; and it had the desired effect. Read it, and try the experiment. O, what an open, gracious door for sinners, who by the sweet gospel are now invited in. As for christian brethren's loving each other, they were and are taught of God to love one another. Members of churches, how do you feel respecting this?

The sequel of this holy letter is instructive and delightful. The christians are told that it was their privilege to keep up such a lively witness, that in all times of trouble, trials, sorrows, &c. the lively hopes of heaven should ena-

ble them to rejoice evermore, with prayers and thanksgivings; for this was and is the will of God.

O, brother, hear the word of the Lord. First, pay proper attention to preaching. Secondly, receive no doctrine but what is according to godliness; and hold fast what is good. Thirdly, abstain from the appearance of evil; believe and be sanctified, body, soul, and spirit. The terms are laid down; the promise is sure. Good man, proceed accordingly; and when you attain to it, you will need no interpreter. The grace of Jesus Christ be with his people. Amen.



II. THESSALONIANS.

REMARKS on a few cardinal points in these three short chapters. First, Paul speaks well of this church in both letters; talks of their growing faith, and increasing love. Notice these things, christians, it is written to you, and all who may follow in succession, unto the end of time.

The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven in a grand and awful manner, in flames of fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the gospel. Vengeance is a just return for mere mockery and slighted mercy. This just fury will fall on gospel slighers, who despise the riches of his grace and his long forbearance. Reader, dost thou know God?

In the second chapter, it appears that some people were under an impression that the Lord would shortly appear; but the apostle told them, by the spirit of prophecy, that there would be a great falling away of the church before that day. Antichrist, the man of sin, would be made manifest, who should set himself at the head of Christ's church in the place of God, professing infallibility, granting indulgences, forgiving sins, &c. This was the full growth of episcopacy; therefore it is well known, that this great falling away of the church was in the days of bishops; and the pope in succession is an overgrown bishop, as the monstrous shark is the fulness of the dog fish. Popery happened several centuries after Paul's prophecy. Is all the blame to be imputed to the corrupt ministry, or partly to the laity? Note, Satan deceived Eve, but she was not there-

by exempt from punishment; neither was Adam. The church is ordered not to receive corrupt ministers, nor their doctrine. Stand fast, brethren, and withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly, that is, contrary to our directions. The scripture is order. See third chapter, verse 14: Here is discipline. The grace of the Lord be with you.

I. TIMOTHY.

CHAPTERS I, II.

Our apostle directed and besought the itinerant minister to abide awhile in Ephesus, and to give the solemn charge to preachers to introduce no new doctrine, but the pure gospel as delivered by the apostles, what is called the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The faithful saying is, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Who is the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God? It is the Lord Jesus. O young men, called to the great work, war a good warfare; hold faith and a good conscience. This constitutes a christian; and the same can be held fast, or be put away, as some had done in the apostle's day. Dear preachers, keep a single eye, fight manfully, steer carefully. It is the will of God that the church should pray for all people, for all sorts and conditions of men; by reason, the Lord willeth all men to be saved, but not out of order. The Lord willeth that godly women should dress in modest apparel, modest looks; not with proud dressed hair, nor gold, nor costly array. A woman is not to assume the place of a public teacher, which is the elder's station. Notwithstanding she was the first sinner, and must pass through great bitterness in bearing children, God will save her in her deep distress, if she continues in the faith and lives a sober and holy life.

CHAPTERS III, IV.

If a man, a preacher, desires the office of an elder in the church from pure motives, he desireth a good work. Read his character. An office above a bresbyter was not known in those days, though some translators choose to call the

elders by that name sometimes for their purpose; they appeared after the golden days; but bishop and elder were all one. Elders should bear a spotless character, and be recommended by the church, because the church can receive or reject preachers, and those men must be in credit among respectable men without. Then let such be proved some time, as a preacher and christian, before ordination; let him arrive to a degree of knowledge above a novice, lest he be taken in the snare that the devil lays for preachers.

Then comes on the order of deacons. This is an honorable office, when properly elected by the laity, that is to say the church, and set apart by the hands of the presbytery, to act in the temporalities of the church, which requires holy honest men. When God calls a deacon to the ministry, let the people select another to act in his place. Let it be observed, that elders and deacons both act as stewards; and it is required of stewards to be faithful.

The 16th verse of the third chapter points out one of the greatest mysteries in the sacred records, viz. That the eternal God was declared, revealed to view, made manifest in the flesh as a person called Jesus Christ! It is the same as Emanuel, i. e. God with us. Let the reader dare to believe what his reason cannot fully comprehend.

The fourth chapter shows, from a former prophecy, the danger of departing from the pure faith, as foretold would come to pass in the latter day: which may be traced in the rise and progress of episcopacy, with the addition of human rules added to the sacred word: which corruption grew up to popery, as is well known; which opened a door for the man of sin, the great impostor, and also for the heretic Arius, &c. To deny the full divinity of Christ, is to destroy the atonement; and that overturns redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins! Such doctrine is heresy, or in plain terms, we judge it "the doctrine of devils!"

CHAPTERS IV, V, VI.

THE churches were troubled with vain disputers, of which the ministry is warned to take care, but cleave to the pure word, read, believe, obey, and teach it; and thereby, through grace, ministers may be saved, with their obedient hearers.

In the fifth chapter, the christian ministers are directed how to conduct themselves towards one another, and to all men. The aged and young, the elders in age and the elders in office, the young ministers must reprove where they see cause; but in this they must act just as the apostle directs; read it with due reverence and obedience.

The churches now are not burdened with widows, as in those former days; so we may pass that over. Christians are bound by the gospel faith, to endeavour to provide for their families.

Chap. v. 10. Observe, pious old widows did wash the traveller's feet, who had walked through the scorching sands with his sandals on. Strange that men of understanding should adopt this as one of the ordinances of Christ's church! Our Lord condescended to wash the disciples' feet; the cause may be understood as follows: First, it may teach ministers to act as servants, and not as lords over his people. Secondly, this may serve as a sample for his people to show kindness one to another. Thirdly, it may answer as a figure of having our souls cleansed through the word. Finally, as water is only a figure, a small quantity is equal to much.

In the 17th verse, &c. we find a subject not well understood by us all, to wit, these two kinds of elders. We cannot find in the good book that the presbytery ever ordained any men by the imposition of hands, but elders and deacons; yet there were chief or principal men among the brethren, that is to say, among the lay members, to act and do business, called "helps," &c. leaders, yea, useful men. See Acts xv. 22, 23. From the best information we ever had, the elders there mentioned both grew out of the same root, viz. *senior*, elder; *seniority*, eldership, elders by age, and elders by office. Old desolate men, it seems, were supported out of the common stock; but labouring elders especially, who have given themselves up to the work, let them not suffer; muzzle not the ox that treadeth out the corn. But is there no provision made for the bishop? No! The way ministers were supported after their first public funds were exhausted, it appears, was by free donations; no law compulsion. The ministers had to learn contentment, even in adversity.

Towards the close of this chapter the apostle saith, be careful against partiality, and against hasty ordination.

Ministers were to ordain elders; but where is it written that elders were directed to ordain bishops over elders? The fountain cannot rise higher than the stream. Look over this thrice, then draw thy conclusion; which will be found thus, Apostle, Elder, and Deacon, whose office was to see about the temporalities of the church. Those deacons were the choice of the lay members, but ordained by the imposition of hands. Reader, notice; you read of bishop and deacon; but bishop, elder and deacon you never read of in the word. Here lies the priestcraft, as it is called.

The close of the third chapter gives a solemn charge to the ministers, how to behave themselves in the house of God, and how to preach Christ, even God, openly and plainly manifest in the flesh. If God be in the flesh of Christ, that flesh must be divine! Look at this again.

CHAPTERS IV, V, VI.

THE fourth chapter speaks prophetically of the mystery of iniquity, or the dreadful apostacy, in the departure of the church from the pure faith that was once delivered to the saints, which terminated in popery; the same issued from its root, episcopacy, as is well known; and if its root be unholy, so are its branches.

We enter the sixth chapter, and lo, it speaks of servants under the yoke, whether voluntary or by compulsion, if it be the law of the land, let the servants be subject, and not be guilty of sedition; and such as are deprived of their natural right, and hired servants whose wages are kept back, vengeance will be taken in some way, on the soul or body, except repentance prevent. An ignorant and inferior class of people are not the men to revolutionize a nation; and therefore, christian ministers will always teach servants or slaves to be subject, until Providence shall open a door whereby they may walk out in credit and safety.

The inspired Paul testifies that the love of money is the root, or main root, of all evil. The interpretation may be thus understood: The heart that is enveloped in the love of this world, and as money answers to the acquiring what the world can afford to the satisfaction of the flesh, therefore it is idolatry; and where the love of the world is rooted in the heart and affections, there the love of God is not. And as the love of God is the root of all good in a believer's

heart, as it is indeed the very nature of God, and draws his affections to things above, whereas the man of this world sets his affections on things below, therefore there is formed a striking contrast. O, man of God, flee these things, fight on, run and seize eternal life.

Chap. vi. 12, 13, 14. Here stands on record an awful, solemn charge on the ministers of the gospel, that they keep the holy commandment without spot, in regular succession, until the Master shall come. Verses 15, 16. Who is this great Potentate? Blessed, yea, King of kings, Lord of lords, yea, the *only* Potentate, who *only* hath immortality; who dwelleth in light that is not accessible to man, therefore it must be eternal increated light; he whom no man can see: to him be honour and power everlasting. Amen. The 14th and 15th verses testifies that this distinguished being is Jesus Christ; and if so, if he be not God Almighty, there can be no God. When this glory is revealed, Arius will shudder. See iv. 15, 16. The scriptures are full and complete.

II. TIMOTHY.

THIS letter abounds with excellent instructions to young Timothy, and all gospel preachers in succession. If Timothy had not the advantage of a classical education, he had the advantage of a religious education, by the precedence of his pious mothers, who taught him to read and understand the holy scriptures, a book but little used in our great schools. Alas! it is not strange that so many deists should issue out of colleges.

Ministers are charged to hold sound doctrine, with faith and love.

About this time there was a dreadful apostacy in Asia, occasioned by two preachers, who are named.

Verse 10. Paul declares his sufferings for the elect's sake, that they may obtain eternal salvation in glory. Thus it appears that the elect have no absolute assurance until they die in the Lord; but they possess a delightful hope in this life; and if faithful, no doubt faithful is he that promises, and will do it.

Young ministers have to study, pray, learn and improve on gifts and grace, until they become workmen who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, in speculative, experimental and practical divinity; not always feeding the sheep with milk, nor building up the church with a long-since finished salvation.

Reader, take notice; if we christians deny Christ, he will also deny us. Those who deny his God-head, indirectly deny him. God may wink at ignorance.

See verse 18. &c. To deny the resurrection of the body, is a fundamental error.

Chap. ii. 19. Observe, in scripture times the followers of Christ were called christians, which is a sacred name; therefore, those who name that name should abstain from the appearance of evil.

The religion of Christ is a revealed religion; we must all be taught of God. Man may be always learning, but never know the truth. Timothy's learning came through a pure channel, even by the letter and spirit of the gospel.

Chap. iv. 7, 8. We read the apostle's late testimony, that he had fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith; wherefore he had no doubt of his crown. The same is appointed for all who love the Lord's appearing. Reader, do you long to see him?

Friendly reader, you will see a solitary paragraph, after you finish the letter, respecting Timothy being the first ordained bishop, meaning an elder over elder. I hope you will not believe it, as not being wrote by the apostle. Be not offended. Ask the Greek scholar.



TITUS.

THIS short letter is not very mysterious, or hard to understand. This young man was converted under the ministry of Paul, and soon commenced an itinerant minister, in obedience to the commandment of God the Saviour. Therefore, Christ in God, is our Saviour. God out of Christ will save none: he is as flames of fire; it would be a fearful thing to fall into his hands. And Christ out of God can save none.

Therefore, as God hath joined both in one, let no man divide. In our Lord's coat there was no seam.

Titus was left awhile in Crete, to put things in order, as directed by the apostle. He who is called elder in the 5th verse, is called bishop in the 7th; thus you see they are not two orders. The making two orders of ministers, bishop over elder, is not of God; nor was the thing known when the church was under scripture government.

In the second chapter, we read of grace appearing, in the letter and by the spirit; and that is the grace producing salvation, for that teacheth every one to reform, come to, and follow the light; which men refuse to do, therefore neglect the great salvation; then how shall they escape divine wrath?

In the fourth chapter, God is called our kind Saviour.

Look at chap. ii. 14. &c. and pray for a redemption that purifies from all outward and secret faults; that we may be God's peculiar people. O, listen, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Chap. iii. 10. Here the church is directed how to treat the man that is a heretic. What shall we count heresy? To deny the Lord that bought us, is damnable heresy; and to own him as inferior to God, is very much like unto heresy. Reformed churches generally believe, that Arius and such like were surely heretics. Jews and philosophers corrupted the churches with fables and human commandments.

The letter to Titus concludes with love and prayer; but the solitary paragraph that appears, saying, Titus was first bishop of such a church, believe it not; it is not scripture.



PHILEMON.

PHILEMON was a dear christian brother, and friend to Paul. Onesimus absconded, or ran away in debt to his master. This servant was not in a state of involuntary slavery, as your black slaves are. This runaway seemed to be directed by Providence, that he heard Paul preach Jesus; he received the truth, and became a convert. The apostle advised him to return to his master, and take this letter with him, &c. &c.

HEBREWS.

CHAPTER I.

THE apostle introduces this letter, by pointing out the several ways in which the Lord formerly spake to his servants; but at length God spake to the world, both Jews and Gentiles, by the Lord; he spake by him who made all things; to whom he says, Thy throne, O God, &c. Jesus the Son was the brightness of the Father's glory. He formerly spake by Isaiah, the prophet, saying, "Lo, I come." This was Jesus, the Word, who came in a stream of emanation, even in streams of bright glory, from the bosom of the eternal Mind; who became clothed with a pure body of flesh, which was the Word made flesh, and was both human and divine. As the pure body grew up to perfect man, his Esse, or divine Soul, which was the eternal Life, by which the body existed, it filled up until the fulness of the Godhead was in the possession of the body of Christ bodily, and thus he became perfect God and man in one person. The Lord's Christ is Jehovah's person, and is the holy express image of Deity, all one incarnate. All that one hath the other is in possession of.

CHAPTERS II, III, IV.

THUS for a gracious purpose Jesus was made, or placed, in a state somewhat lower than the angels, for the purpose of redeeming a lost people by a painful and shameful death; and he, by the divine will and favour, tasted death for every man, to deliver them from the power of Satan and the slavish fear of death; and thus he condescended to sing praises in the midst of the church. Dear people, who enjoy such great liberties as the American citizens do, how will you escape eternal misery if you make light of so great salvation? It behoved Christ to be like unto his people, that he might be our merciful high-priest in things pertaining to God, respecting a reconciliation.

In the third chapter, there is a similitude drawn between Moses and the divine Saviour. Moses was charged to build the former church, called a house, exactly by the pattern

showed him on the mount. So Moses built the house, and acted in it according to the word, as a servant; but Christ built the new church according to the heavenly house above, and became master of it. The kingdom above is governed by the word of God, as recorded below, if an angel can be depended on, who said to John, I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus, and those who keep the sayings of this book. Rev. xxii. 8. The church in heaven and the church on earth are established on justice and judgment. Psalm lxxxix. Isaiah ix. Josephus called the scripture government a theocracy.

Here follows an exhortation that christians should be careful to guard against a hard heart, nor cast away their confidence, to beware of presumption and despair; lest they should fall as the Jews did. The danger of departing from the living God, is seen in the 12th verse.

The fourth chapter treats on the doctrine of the believer's rest. Rest is desirable only to the weary. The penitent burdened soul, who discovers no human probability to escape the pains of hell, his soul feels trouble and heaviness; he is called by the Word, which is the voice of the great Redeemer, to come to him by faith, nothing doubting, and the Lord will give him rest, by remitting all his sins, and giving him the witness of reconciliation and the consolation of Christ, with divine love shed abroad in his heart. Yet this rest is not so permanent as to be exempt from tribulation and various perplexities. In this corrupt and unfriendly world, the best of men must struggle through tribulation; but in Christ they feel peace. However, there remains a rest for the people of God, but not in this polluted world; for if the church takes her rest here, she will meet with a sore destruction. See Hosea. The Sabbath is a day of rest; the new dispensation is a rest from the heavy yoke of the former dispensation: but the rest in heaven is free from trouble, toil and pain. Friend, let us fear, lest a promise being left us of that rest, we should fall short of it, as the poor Jews did. When the word was not mixed with faith it did not profit. O, reader, labour hard for the meat that endures as long as your lives, and then rest for ever in glory. Remember well that this rest remains for the children of God, and them only.

CHAPTERS IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX.

Here the apostle introduces the priesthood of the great Redeemer. Reader, here comes on a very great mystery, which we are bound to believe, to wit, A man appeared in the days of yore, who dwelt in a place called Salem, which signifies peace. He was a priest and king; his name was Melchisedec; the very man who met Abraham when he was returning from the victory; whom Melchisedec accommodated with bread and wine; to whom Abraham paid tribute, which discovers that Abraham, though a patriarch, was inferior to this king of righteousness and peace. Melchisedec blessed Abraham; therefore the less must be blessed of the greater. Reader, observe that under the law the Levites received tithes from the people; but here it is said they paid tithes to this great priest, as being in the loins of Abraham at that time. According to this rule perfection was not under the old school-master, but the new. Thus the man Melchisedec was made by way of similitude like unto the Son of God, who abideth a priest continually. As it is written, Acts viii. 33. who shall declare his generation? so then, who shall declare the generation of Melchisedec? If any one can, let him. This Gentile priest was eternally intended for that purpose, and foretold by the prophet, saying, Thou (Christ) art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. Psalm cx. 4. Then, as touching the last eternal priesthood, it derived its authority from God directly, confirmed by an oath; therefore Jesus having no human father, nor with respect to his eternity, no mother; and as touching the Levitical priesthood, no father, no descent, neither the type, nor antetype; therefore, as Christ succeeds in the priesthood, it had no beginning of days nor end of life. So then, the new priesthood, with its gospel government, remains unchangeable. From hence the apostle expatiates largely; the Jewish priesthood being abolished by the great sacrifice of our divine High-priest, who has gone into the holy place, made without hands, eternal in the heavens; to whom we have access by a new and living way, &c. The latter is called the new covenant, or testament. See the ninth chapter, 16, 17. Here it shows that a will is not in force until the death of the testator. Then why do men

presumptuously assert that John the baptist administered the christian baptism?

CHAPTERS X, XI, XII.

IN the tenth chapter, we read of one, saying, as legal sacrifices will not answer to take away sin, then said I, "Lo, I come." Verse 5. "But a body hast thou prepared me." Every reader is hereby requested to take the following question into serious consideration, viz. Who is this that saith, "Lo, *I* come," and "a body hast thou prepared for *me*." Who is this *I* and *me*? In chap. x. 20. this prepared body is said to be a vail, to cover whatever is within that vail. Now, reader, perhaps you will come at it. If this vail be the humanity, that within is, what? Is it a human soul like ours, or is it his divinity? Work it.

There is a doctrine contained in the sixth and tenth chapters respecting total apostacy: let it be examined. It reads as follows: It is impossible for those once enlightened, and who have tasted the heavenly gift, the good word of God, and the Holy Ghost, yea, felt the powers of the world to come; if they fall away it will be impossible to renew them again (the second time) to repentance, &c. If we (christians) sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. If they who despised Moses's law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; how shall we, who possess the name, and after that fall away so far as to despise his covenant, his laws, his name, and blood, ever be renewed, seeing we have despised the blood of the covenant, and, as it were, crucified the Lord afresh, and brought a public scandal on Christ's cause. Notice the character, having received the knowledge of the truth; having the understanding thus enlightened, the passions so affected as to taste the good word, and received the holy Spirit as a heavenly gift; moreover, to feel the powers of the world to come (being the gospel age), to feel its power as is recorded in the first chapter to the Romans, at the 16th verse. I am not ashamed of the gospel, seeing it is the power of God to salvation—to believers it is impossible to renew a soul when the Spirit leaves him. O, christians of every church, suffer not yourselves to be deceived; be not high minded,

but fear. Let the downfall of the Jews, and members of ruined christian churches, convince you of the danger of turning back to folly, and from that to perdition. If preachers will not be saved; let the awful texts, and these friendly lines, be seriously noticed by the lay members.

Chapter x. 24. Let the followers of our Lord pay attention to the divine orders, feel for each united member, meet together as oft as you conveniently can, and in these select meetings converse, sing, and pray. Reader, will you do so? Read Malachi, iii. 16, &c. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye follow and do them.

Verse 15. Now the man that is justified by faith, he continues to keep alive to God by faith, to the saving of his soul; but if any one draw back, Christ's soul, or spirit, will have no pleasure in him. Never forget this axiom, Faith without works is dead.

Read on about the cloud of witnesses; let us be fully persuaded of the certainty, and put by all unnecessary weights, and beware of your most besetting sin; if you find you are too easily overcome by it, make no common use of it, at your peril. Had you tried an enemy four times and you were overcome each time, would it not be your wisdom to let him alone? See verse 9. God is the Father of our spirits.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE church is ordered to be subject to the apostles, who ruled and governed the churches by their sacred writings, which came from God through a pure channel; for they had the key of the kingdom; therefore, that which they bound on earth, was, and is, bound in heaven. But since the apostles, the churches are charged to prove us and our doctrine, and search the royal body of divinity; and all the truth to hold fast and improve, but cast the bad away. So far as preachers preach and teach the truth, people are bound to obey, but no farther, neither their doctrines nor discipline; else you would be obeying men.

Pay attention to the eighth verse. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; that is to say, the same immutable, unalterable; the same before time, in time, and for ever. Amen.

JAMES.

THE apostle James styles himself a servant of God, and the Lord Jesus. He mentions God and Christ, himself the servant; yet but one law-giver, iv. 12; and he is able to save and to destroy. Read it over again. Therefore, the pure apostolic church had no rules to bind her members but the holy laws of Christ, recorded in the sacred book. In this letter, as first addressed to the Jewish christians, and then to the world, he urges the christians to exercise patience, yea, let it have its perfect work. He teaches the Lord's people to beware of covetousness, and partiality, by honouring the rich and despising the poor; saying, do not rich men oppress you, yea, and blaspheme that worthy name by which you are called? All who speak insulting language against Christ, his church, or the name christian, it appears, are guilty of the crime of blasphemy. This sets the name of Christ higher than the heavens. The author solicits the serious attention of those who falsely call themselves christians (perhaps to keep off reproach), yet deny that Christ is their God. Examine, friends, are you not bordering on blasphemy? This man of God brings the rich brother and the poor brother to a religious level, by reducing one and exalting the other. He enforces good works as the sure proof of a pure active faith; that we must be doers, as well as hearers, else we (not the devil) deceive ourselves. As faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, and that also through the divine operations of the Spirit; but not irresistibly, ministers should be careful to preach pure doctrine. Corrupt doctrine begets its own likeness; and this causes so many faiths, and so little pure and undefiled religion. Pure doctrine, from a pure heart and a holy life, like an outside garment unspotted from the world; this, and only this, will stand approved before God. The gospel law is a "royal law;" how superior to our minister home-made laws. It is a perfect law; a holy man obeys it in his soul with delight and perfect desire; and his infirmities do not condemn, by reason of intercession. But he that walks by a crooked rule, will never make straight paths for his feet, which causeth his followers to be deemed crooked disciples. The christian govern-

ment is the law of liberty, as touching the ceremonial law. The tongue is compared to an unruly horse, that must be governed by a curb bridle; he that bridleth his tongue, may govern the other members. Professors may talk too much, when not profitable for body nor soul: sometimes they bless, and sometimes they curse, and swear; not after the vulgar swearing, but to wish evil on a person is a curse; to bind what you report by any thing that is in heaven or on earth in common conversation, is swearing; when necessity calls for a solemn declaration, or before a magistrate, it is a different case.

The apostle utters dreadful woes against the rich oppressors; as also misers, who hold back from the labourers what is their just due; but as the times are precarious, or rather dangerous, moreover what cannot be cured we will try to endure; therefore the author entreats such characters, if they think they are justifiable before God, to contend with the inspired apostle, chapter v. The author's friendly council is, gentlemen, God is no respecter of persons, in point of equal justice; consider your ways, love your soul, love your wives and children, yea, feel for future generations, direct your highest rulers to call for all, and collect the wisdom of America to form a plan that may destroy none, and save our dear nation. Tears are collecting, and the author, who is your weeping friend, drops the subject.



I. PETER.

LET us now attend to the writings of that great apostle and martyr, whose name is Peter. His first general letter, after his salutation, gives us to understand how election cometh, and when. We are elected according to foreknowledge; first to the Jews in this day; and in the appointed time and order of things, many were elected when they obeyed the truth, and felt the sanctifying influence of the Spirit, and the virtue of the sprinkled blood, with grace, peace, &c. This doctrine appears plain and pure.

Verse 3, &c. The power by which we are born of God, is the power of Christ's resurrection; and we are here told what a glorious inheritance we are born to, if our faith

continues pure, by which we may overcome the world, and by the power of grace we can endure to the end. The apostle exhorts and comforts the people of God.

In the 11th and 12th verses we hear that the Spirit of Christ inspired the prophets, as also the apostles.

Let the 15th verse be observed. Why christians should be holy is, because they are called by the Holy One.

Reader, do notice the 22d verse. Seeing you have purified your souls by obeying the truth, &c. unto unfeigned love of the brethren. Read what follows, and obey.

In the last verse of this first chapter, we are told that the word of the Lord endureth for ever; therefore, keep to the sure side, hold to the word for safety as to faith and government.

The second chapter is plain instruction, as is also the third until we come to the 19th verse. The apostle aims to establish the christians in the belief, that there is but one Holy Spirit, but many operations, and these operations are from Christ; and it was Christ in the Spirit, that went and preached by Noah before the flood, to the wicked souls in prison. Christ's was the spirit, and that was the life he laid down and took up again. When was this? Perhaps near two thousand years before the man Christ was crucified; when the long forbearance of God waited in the days of Noah. Could those be the predestinated elects, or reprobates, that he bore with so long? That all wicked sinners, as touching their souls, are shut up in darkness, under the power of sin and unbelief, in the bonds of iniquity, under divine sentence of eternal death; and such prisoners, by the same divine Spirit that preached by Noah, were preached to by Isaiah, xlix. Say to the prisoners, Go forth. Compare lxi. 1. Zechariah ix 11, &c.

The fourth chapter is mostly an exhortation to a self-denying, holy life of love, kindness, patience, &c. And if they were hated because they loved and bore the name of christian, let them not be ashamed, for Christ on your part is glorified, and the good Spirit resteth on you. Commit to him the keeping of your souls. O, saint and sinner, consider the 18th verse; read it in the good letter.

In the fifth and last chapter in the first letter, the apostle exhorts preachers, under the appellation of elders, as ruling, active men, but not lords over God's people. He called himself an elder, and an apostle also; men appoint-

ed by the mouth of Christ, for great purposes, to whom he gave the keys. The apostle spake nothing about an order of ministers over elders, now called bishops; such were not known during the golden age. It is evident that elders were appointed to succeed the apostles as to the care of the churches, having the apostles' writings for their guide, who, although dead, yet speak. Prelates who claim preeminence, ought to show their scripture authority. Men may, by a kind of backward etymology, go on to overseer, and make bishop and elder one and the same; but the two orders, one over the other, perhaps none can show from the oracles of God. Neither did the apostles give licence to men after them to bind God's people with creeds, nor books of discipline.



II. PETER.

THE three chapters of the second epistle of Peter, may be illustrated after the following manner. First. Believers partake of christian virtues, or godliness, through the revealed knowledge of him who hath called us to a life of virtue, which is a preparative to a state of glory. The promises of God, from first to last, are gracious, exceeding great, and to the believer's soul precious. The exhortation is, add to your faith more of every christian virtue. Observe these orders, and such believers shall never fall, but live and die in Christ, and be admitted into heaven. This is the precious doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Scriptures were wrote by holy men of God, as they were moved by divine impulses; but the pure word of prophecy is to feel the life, light and power of the word within the soul. Reader, observe that.

In the second chapter we are warned to beware of heresy, which is thought to be a fundamental error, even denying the Lord who bought them, to their swift destruction. Should they deny his divinity, is that heresy?

The following part of this second chapter is like unto an angry cloud, loaded with awful lightning and peals of thunder, levelled against backsliders who have forsaken the right way. It would have been better for such never to have

known the way of righteousness. It would require a very learned man, to lecture from that chapter and prove the unconditional-perseverance of the saints.

The latter part of this letter speaks of a people, who expressed their thoughts that the preachers were trying to terrify people about the Lord Jesus's coming to judgment, seeing all things continued as they were. They lived in lust and wickedness, and hoped he would never come; and others may wish it so. So it was with sinners before the flood; so they did in Sodom, where Lot laboured; so it is now: but he will come, and that in flames of fire and vengeance, to burn the world he made. He is now carrying on preaching, and his spirit is striving, not willing that any should perish, but come to repentance. Can he be waiting for the non-elect to repent without grace, and be saved from perishing without a Saviour? And can the elect be in danger? Dear reader, if thou art a sinner, make no delay, escape for thy life; lest you should repent when mercy is clean gone. Heap not sin upon sin. The Son of the Blessed is very pitiful; try an humble petition, if you do no more than David's prayer, "Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul."

This new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Here my brother, perhaps, will reject our doctrine, by reason it is thought this earth will be renewed, and the saints dwell here. O, sirs, this is a time world, and was never intended to be converted into a heaven of glory. Things that are seen are temporal; but things which are not seen are eternal. The bodies of the saints are corrupt earth; but in the resurrection they shall have spiritual pure bodies, as well as souls. Let us fear and love God, and we shall dwell with him far above this middle world. Attend to an important question, saying, Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness? Grace prepare us!

I. JOHN.

CHAPTER I.

EIGHTEEN verses of the first chapter of John's gospel, and seven verses in this first chapter, are transcendantly glorious, more like the diction of an angel than a man. This affords marrow and fatness, milk and honey. The verses here mentioned, opens the glorious theology in so pure and masterly a light, that, standing on its own foundation and clothed in its original dress, it needeth no human aid nor hand to support its trembling ark, and gives defiance to all the enemies of Jesus, who try to dethrone him and make him less than God. Will a man rob God or Christ of his Godhead? Satan must know, or might expect, the foundation stood sure; yet his ambition is such that he repeatedly has, and still does, attempt it. Hear the beloved John, saying, That which was from the beginning, even the eternal Word, which was God, and being made flesh, we have seen him with our natural eyes, and felt him with our hands; we call it eternal life; which is God, in Esse. And those who walk in this truth, which is light, they unite in a body, and by virtue of blood and water, they will become sanctified, or cleansed from all sin.

CHAPTER II.

THIS chapter is a lively exhortation, in which every reader will notice three gracious heads of doctrine. And first, verse 6th, He that saith he abideth in Christ, as thousands say, "Once in Christ, always in Christ." Their assertion cannot be received here, without scripture proof; and that proof is, they must walk even as Christ walked, who has left us precept and example. It will not do to suppose that Christ's holy walk is imputed to believers; but they in their measure must track his steps. Friend, do not pass over this with indifference.

Secondly, the apostle informs us of three classes in the school of Christ, to wit, new converts, strong believers, yea, and men of deep knowledge and heavenly understanding.

Thirdly, that those who do the will of God, abideth for ever. See verse 23d, To deny the Son is denying the Father, by reason they are one. See the 24th verse; He that abideth in the Son, abideth in the Father; and he that abideth in Christ, sinneth not, being led by the Spirit.

CHAPTERS III, IV, V.

THE remarks on these chapters may be illustrated as follows: chap. iii. 2. We are now the sons of God, and what we shall be is not fully revealed; but when Christ shall appear we shall see him as he is, and not as he was in the days of his flesh. There will be no Arians then. Every knee shall bow to the one Lord God. As the saints behold him in his glorified state, they will be changed into his likeness, in their measure. Compare iv. 17. This will embolden the saints in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. Jesus came by blood and water; these were the two seals, pointing out the way of justification and sanctification. But outward circumcision was a mark of distinction, a figure of spiritual circumcision and spiritual baptism. The way to walk safely is to cleave close to the weightier points, and not to leave the lesser matters undone. Circumcision was the direction of infinite wisdom, therefore of divine authority, and not to be put down by man. Jesus came by blood and water, which answers to the fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness. Zech. Circumcision in itself was nothing but a figure; yet the effects were very profitable, by reason they were in covenant, and taught by the sacred oracles. So baptism is a figure of spiritual baptism, which is essential; as Paul observes, where he says, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." As baptism is a seal of the new covenant, it must of right exist during the gospel dispensation. It began with the great national commission, and will endure so long as the gospel is preached. If Moses was a type of Christ, and men, women and children were baptised unto Moses; so all nations, when brought over to christianity, should be baptised unto Christ. It is highly dangerous to abrogate what God himself hath appointed. Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, though not always from pure motives; yet it held up the name, the only name by which souls could be saved. The author rejoices to see parents offering up their little

children to Christ in baptism, whereby they become national and nominal christians; and the parents acknowledge Christ and his religion—as the promise is to adults and children.

II. JOHN.

JOHN wrote to the mother church in Jerusalem, in the character of an elect lady, and rejoiced to find of her scattered converts walking in the truth, or word. He warns the lady against deceivers, and their false doctrine. If any preacher comes among you, and bringeth not our doctrine, receive him not as a preacher, give him no encouragement, lest you be condemned with him of the evils that may follow. Therefore, the churches have a right to reject the doctrine, and the preacher whom they collectively judge corrupt.

III. JOHN.

IN this short concluding letter, we will observe in particular two points. First, those strange travelling ministers, that came recommended, how they should be treated, and assisted by the brethren in Jerusalem, seeing they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. Secondly, look in the 9th verse, and you will see or read the spirit of a bishop. Grace to all the precious.

J U D E.

JUDE addressed himself to the sanctified christians, warning them to be awake in days that were evil. Satan had sent out an army of corrupters; many of these had been lights in the church, whom Jude compares to wandering stars. He compares them to spots in their communion, feeding without fear. They did show something like religion, but were clouds without water, carried about with winds of doctrine. Trees without fruit, at length dead the second time; once quickened, but dead again, plucked up by the roots, and finally fallen. Such will show themselves sometimes by casting up their mire and dirt; like Balaam, or like Cain.

To prove the danger of falling from grace, while in a state of probation, he calls our attention to the fallen angels. As the author expects in a short time to render to his Master an account of his stewardship, from a weighty impression he gives his advice to young converts; never, O, never join a church which believes that converts cannot finally fall from their first justification. Yet you are free.

He exhorts the true church, ministers and lay members, to contend earnestly for the faith and doctrine as was first delivered to the saints—not partial salvation, but common and free for all. The brethren were and are directed to build up each other in the holy faith, lest they lose the love of God out of their souls; also to labour to prevent others from falling into those destructive errors, pulling them as brands from eternal fire.

The conclusion of this alarming letter is, that men of pure faith hold Jesus and the Father to be *one* (not them), *one* Lord, who is able to keep us from falling, and will, if we obey him; for he is the only wise God our Saviour: to him be glory, &c. &c. for ever. Amen.

REVELATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

JOHN the holy apostle, who, for the word of divine truth, and the testimony that he bore, by the authority of the prophets and the apostles, respecting the divinity of Jesus Christ, suffered persecution and banishment; in which state of exile, Jesus revealed to him visions of himself, and prophetic views, by striking similitudes, of things that were coming to pass until the end of time. It is a book of visions and prophecies respecting the rise and fall of kingdoms and of the church. Many things which are here written have passed, some are now in operation, and the rest are sure to come; but the end is not yet.

Jesus sent his angel to inform his apostle, and for him to deliver the same to the ministers and churches collectively. The book is from heaven, the author is Deus, and is from the seven spirits, or the absolute perfections of the Most High. John bare record of the sacred scriptures, and the testimony of Jesus as the true Messiah, which being understood is, God with us. He then affirms that those who read, hear and obey the word, are and shall be blessed. Nothing less than Christ's blood, through the Spirit, could wash or cleanse our polluted souls from sin. Here is love. O believers, view with deep humility, your exalted station, even kings and priests to God.

As our Lord went up in clouds, so in like manner will he return, at the close of time. His persecutors will feel his presence, and mourn when it is too late. Amen. Even so saith the Spirit. Those visions happened on the Lord's day, that first day of the week, in honorable remembrance of his resurrection; which all christians ought to keep holy.

Reader, attend to the testimony of Jesus, and see how you understand it. Note, "I (Jesus) am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." Almighty is the superlative, even Jesus.

The vision of the seven golden candlesticks, and the high priest walking in the midst, shows that Jesus is in the midst of every one of his churches upon earth, even if there

be but two or three united in his name, as christians. Then he must be omniscient to be omnipresent in every church at the same instant.

The vision of his head and hair as white as snow, denotes his purity and eternity; his head is his Godhead, the eternal Deus. His eyes as flames of fire, may show that the eyes of the Lord doth run all over the earth. 2 Chron. xvi. 9. Rev. ii. 18. His eyes as flames from which nothing can be hid. His feet appeared as melting brass, which may show his awful justice, when he stands in judgment on our souls. His awful voice was as the roaring of the seas. The stars in his right hand, may denote the gospel preachers, all workers together with God, in his protecting hand; moving together as ruling stars, under the influence and order of the Lord; no one star above another in glory: so it was in scripture times. Seven stars, seven churches, includes all in regular order and succession.

CHAPTERS II, III.

ATTEND to what is said to the church, and churches successively, in her revolutions to the end. First, He approved of her works, her patience, her labour, her zeal for the support of pure doctrine, in trying usurpers and putting them out of the church; yet he had somewhat against her, for she, in general, had left her first love. She is not expelled, but laid under censure; but if she does not take the reproof and amend, it will come to expulsion. This is like falling from grace.

Secondly, he views the church in the flames of persecution, even in the ten heavy persecutions by the vengeful Jews and Roman emperors, called ten days, or ten persecutions. Christians may be reduced, poor, and still be rich; no charge against them: for against such as are truly faithful there is no law, but a crown of life prepared.

He appears to the church sometimes as having a two-edged sword, even law and gospel, and if offended will cut us asunder. To every church, or the christian church at all times in succession, he takes notice of their faith, love, zeal, good works, order and discipline; especially in keeping out corrupt doctrine, trying innovators, and casting them out of the church, by the authority of the divine law, and the voice of the church wherein such a minister may labour, or

their chosen committee, or any lawful way of procedure, the minister or ministers, deacons and leading helps among the laity, acting under church authority. Had they any discipline but the scriptures?

Hear, O christians, hear what the Lord saith, the same the Holy Ghost saith to the church, when the people had the form, the name, but had nearly lost the life and power of religion; they were called to awake and be more zealous, more spiritual, as the last spark was ready to perish, for their works of faith were not pleasing to God, therefore the Spirit was offended; and if that spark perished, they would be twice dead; the candlestick removed from that people, as in Asia, Africa, Arabia, &c. &c. He views at a time, and saith, I would ye were hot for my cause, for my glory; or be cold, give it out; I despise lukewarm love; beware, lest I cast you out. Is that falling from grace? O, churches, attend.

Again, thus saith the Lord to the church, when established by the emperor, who made the preachers great men, and the churches grew rich, but dim sighted; yet felt themselves in no need, when they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked; much like the established church in America before our independence. The same spirit is struggling for an establishment. Prevent it, Good Lord; and may every true follower of Christ who may read these strictures, give us their amen.

Yet the following promises are left for the encouragement of every sincere soul. But be it remembered, that he who endures to the end, the same shall be saved. If but a few names in a city, church, or place, though in general they were in a decline, yet the few names which had not defiled their garments, were accounted worthy to walk with Christ in white. The common people, in church or state, are by no means qualified to start a reformation. After the church changed from the apostolic order, the voice from the Master to the aggrieved few, was, and still is, come out from among them.

CHAPTER IV.

THE contents of this chapter, in their simple meaning, are hard to understand. John saw in the vision a great white throne, when heaven opened to his view; the rich co-

lours that appeared to adorn the Judge who sat thereon, denoted, his dignity, his riches and supreme excellency. The bow denotes the covenant. The order that appeared, to represent the necessity of order, as in the old Jerusalem, so in the spiritual new Jerusalem. The order of the true church is to be fixed according to divine and heavenly instructions, and not human and earthly. Thus saith the Lord, My kingdom is not of this world. David, by the Spirit of Christ saith, Judgment and justice are the support of my throne. The Spirit saith the same of his church or kingdom below. Isaiah ix. 7. Moreover, John saw the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. More than common truth it is, that the proper faith and order of the new church came through a pure channel, and that it is corrupted by leading men for certain purposes. The lightnings were seen, thunderings and voices were heard, besides seven lamps like fire were burning. The lightnings, &c. may signify the testaments of God, exhibiting the doctrines of the pure fiery law, and the glorious gospel. He is able to protect his friends, and to destroy his enemies in awful judgments; in a chain of well directed providences, opens what was shortly to transpire or come to pass; perhaps pointing principally towards poor Jerusalem. The seven spirits denote that all the divine attributes of Deity were in harmony respecting his righteous proceedings.

The appearance of four animals, the first under the similitude of a lion, denoting strength; the second was like a calf, with his divided hoof, denoting a clean animal according to law; the third had a face like a man, denoting human; the last appeared like a strong-pinioned swift-flying eagle. This man face, and the flying eagle, denotes an evangelist, flying to and fro, preaching the everlasting gospel. Perhaps the mystery may be applied to the four undaunted evangelists, who were inspired, as if full of light, as eyes before, as foreseeing things coming to pass, and well understanding the prophecies. And they all gave glory to him who sat on the throne, which was God in Christ and Christ in God. Amen.

CHAPTERS V, VI, VII.

On the fifth chapter we will remark, first, the proclamation, Who is worthy, or able to open the deep mysteries of God sealed up in this book? No one to be found—but Jesus, who was compared to the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is the great prophet, who possessed the seven spirits; the infallible teacher.

Secondly, the Lamb appeared in the vision as newly slain, which shows his precious blood will answer for the last soul who may be converted on earth, as well as for Adam in Paradise. And the Lamb appeared with seven horns, denoting almighty power; seven eyes, which show infinite knowledge. See Zech. iii. 9. On one stone were seven eyes. And John heard all creation as it were, give glory to God and the Lamb, being one Lord God.

The sixth chapter seems to reveal the secret treasures of wrath coming on his murderers. The first vision was a white horse, denoting the pure gospel flying; he that sat on him was the great King, who could save and destroy. The red horse denoted dreadful wars, with Jews and Romans; read Josephus. Then the appearance of a black horse—O hard famine! The pale horse appeared, and grim death, his rider, &c.

Behold in a vision the souls of the martyrs, as it were visionary, not really but supernaturally; or as it were, like Abel's blood virtually cried, not vocally, saying as it were, how long? The answer was, Rest awhile, more of your brethren will soon be with you; here are white robes prepared for you, as the vision testifies.

The sixth seal opened the appearance like unto the last day; the people were terrified as in an earthquake; political and other leading lights fell; dark horror overpowered their souls; in a word, it was the great day of wrath on those whose ancestors uttered the following words, "His blood be upon us and our children!" The Jews and Romans united to slay the Lord, and both murdered his children; and Jesus suffered the Romans to fall on the Jews, as if legions had come out of the burning pit. The apostle had a pleasing view which followed the alarm, which was that of a company just entering into glory, with their well washed robes on. O, happy change!

CHAPTERS VIII, IX.

REMARKS on the eighth chapter beginning with a silence in heaven for about half an hour; prayers, incense, smoke, &c. may be understood as followeth: this was the manner of the high priest in the old church offering up incense in the holy place, about that space, at which time the people without were praying, and in sweet private devotion; an answer in holy zeal like fire would come down, and their silence would break out in rejoicing. The temple was the heaven. David knew it was so when he thus expressed himself, saying, "while I was thus musing the fire kindled." Christian's can understand it.

Then followeth the appearance or semblance of approaching judgments on the enemies of the church. What follows? Wars, tumults, nation against nation, leading men falling like stars from the church, such as Arius, false prophets, &c. prophetic views of more woes. These points are not placed methodically. Judgments on nations, for national crimes, are compared to hail storms, fire; darkness by impostures, called fallen sars; storms on the rivers and seas, on the inhabitants thereof. The reader may appeal to universal history for particular times and places.

CHAPTERS IX, X, XI.

A FEW remarks, as continuing from the eighth chapter. Leading men in the church of Judea, were lights compared to stars, and the church was called heaven. The seditious army of zelots compared to swarms of devouring locusts, who rushed in among those who were shut up, whom they plundered, and, like perished hounds, they fell to killing each other, and the Romans with their battering rams without; the woes in Matthew then were fulfilling. The murderers are represented in their frightful garb. The green grass was spared that were these faithful christians, who made their escape at a certain opportunity.

The tenth chapter shows the sacred book open, the angel standing on the earth and seas, who pronounced the end of the lovely temple. Seven voices, the whole mind of God, uttered something not allowed to be written, perhaps too

awful and heavenly to be repeated, like Paul's ascension to heaven; what he heard there he never uttered.

The little book open, is the new dispensation, with good news to Jews and Gentiles, sweet to feed on, but a faithful preacher will feel many sorrows in his ministry. Then they who oppose the gospel among the Gentiles, it foretold bloody persecutions; after which will follow heavy judgments, &c. &c.

The loosing the four evil angels, who were restrained from their purpose, were to be let loose, and a dreadful army crossed the Euphrates, and fell upon the Romans like scorpions, the rear that followed were merciless murderers, and robbers, &c. Darkness poured out of the pit; the greater darkness always the more cruelties; (grammatical tenses not obligatory in these visions.) In those days of darkness, episcopacy existed, and in the sixth century Mahomet arose, who charged the christians with idolatry for worshipping Christ; for, saith he, though he be a great prophet, he is no God! So, many departed from the faith, giving heed to the doctrine of devils. Do not the late doctrine of Arians border near upon this?

The two witnesses in saccloth of sorrow, were the faithful abettors of the sacred scriptures, old and new; and in these awful revolutions the two witnesses appeared as dead; were made light of, but they were not buried, and they revived again; and do often rise and fall. As they rise a glorious prophecy follows, saying, "the kingdoms of this world are (and will) become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, &c.

CHAPTER XII.

THE twelfth chapter tells of persecution, the woman in travail, i. e. the church engaged for converts; the man child may denote the faithful ministry in succession, preserved under divine protection; her flying to the wilderness out of the populous cities from death. Saints shall have power in a coming day to subdue all their enemies. Papal authority from the red dragon's mouth, was sent as a flood after the woman; but civil authority helped her. When the devil, who is in the corrupt old church, when he is cast into the earth, wo to the wicked, he will cause them to de-

stroy one the other. The author shall very briefly touch on the rest and conclude.

CHAPTERS XIII—XXI.

THE thirteenth chapter treats on episcopacy full grown, with governments and horns of power! This beast has had many wounds; among which, Napoleon gave him a deep wound in the head, but by the help of England it is nearly healed!

The fourteenth foretells what joy the fall of popery will afford the Lamb's company. Then, through the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, it shows the vials of wrath that will be poured out! Seventeenth and eighteenth tells of the rage of antichrist, and the vengeance the enemies will feel, by wars and earthquake distresses! Kings falling, others rising, &c.

Reader, stop, and attend to two notable points. Notice the royal army, who were led on to victory by the Captain of their salvation. Read their character; "called, chosen and faithful." These do still constitute the pure invisible church, now in the wilderness, parted about in different religious societies. When corrupt mountains fall, popery, prelacy and monarchy shall be no more; all the precious will come together, and rally round the royal standard. Read the prophet Isaiah, chap. xi. from the 6th verse. This happy time is said to be the millennium; but that Christ will come down personally and reign in Jerusalem, appears to be the language of a doting clergy, which set Mr. E. S. to dreaming. Much learning makes some men mad.

The next remark is noted in the fifteenth chapter, vers. 1, &c. The victorious army, after a long combat truth gained the day. They obtained a complete victory over the beast or pope, over his episcopal image, over every human name and human creed. The royal army, as in the vision, will make their stand on the pure word of God, clear as glass, strong, and deep as eternity, law and gospel mingled with fire; they sung to their harps the song of Moses and the Lamb. Spiritual Babylon, who traded in slaves, men with souls, is fallen! Merchants looking at a distance, crying, alas!

The nineteenth chapter goes on with rejoicing, as those newly married.

The twentieth chapter shows there is a resurrection foreseen in a vision, perhaps the fulness of the Gentiles and the restoration of the Jews, all in union; which is life from the dead. This will be like a new heaven and new earth. The general resurrection will soon follow; but some time after Satan has the prison bounds again.

Friendly reader, attend to the report in chap. xix. from the 13th verse. Jesus is called the Word of God; but he had a name that none could read but himself; we may safely suppose it is Deus.

CHAPTER XXII

THIS chapter closes the book. Here we should attend to two particular points; first, the relation of angels in heaven, and saints on earth. verse 9. Secondly, the Bible is the sacred rule for angels, and christians on earth. "Them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." Angels all worship Jesus, by reason he is God.

To conclude, the Lord bids all men to beware of adding to his will, or taking a sentence from it, at their peril. God protect the truth. Amen.

So John the baptist preached, saying, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." That the kingdom of glory is the mother of the primitive church below; observe.

1. My kingdom is not of his world, saith the King: take notice.

2. The new Jerusalem came down from God out of heaven: so saith the apostle John.

3. The laws of the old kingdom were from heaven. See Dan. ix. 9. We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in *his laws*, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. This is certain.

Listen. O, listen, and hear what a holy angel just from heaven said to John, Rev. xxii. 9. "I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book." We christians have one law giver, who is able to save, and destroy. James iv. 12. We are under the law of Christ. Paul. We establish the law. So then, the true church is an established church by law; but the law is suitable to the church, for it came down from heaven. Add not to the word, says the prophet.

In the sequel of Paul to the Galatians, he breathes the spirit of a man of God; he exhorts his friends to hold fast, and press on. He travails in birth a second time for his persecutors, with his usual prayer, The grace and love of God be with you all. Amen.

EPHESIANS.

CHAPTER I.

HERE the reader will enter into mysteries respecting the subject of dispute about foreknowledge, decrees, &c. Before the foundation of the world he knew his works. Known unto God are all his works, past, present and future. He is not only infinitely wise, but he is wisdom itself; for divine wisdom is essential to his eternal existence. He must, therefore, be possessed of all knowledge. (as we talk) past, present and to come; but with him it is all present, by reason he fills every point in duration. Let David speak Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot at-

tain it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, all thy wrath is there; if I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth or sea, thy right hand will hold me. In him we move. He seeth through the divisibility of matter. He speaks of things before they come to pass, as though they were. He eternally saw all the fluctuating scenes of time. He decreed to give the ruined world a Saviour, and therefore he is said to be a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. According to infinite knowledge, he decreed, predestinated, and marked out his generation according to the flesh, which fixed the Jews an elect nation, for the purpose that the eternal Jesus should be the first born among many brethren, as having the pre-eminence. Thus the Jews (before the Gentiles were called) were his people. But the scriptures foresaw and foretold, that the Gentiles would be in time the Lord's elect; therefore the gospel was preached to Abraham, when his name was enlarged from Abram to Abraham, according to his good will and the glory of his grace. Beware how you draw your calculations from God's foreknowledge, and confound not his foreknowledge with his righteous decrees. Justice and judgment supports his throne: mercy and truth goes before. He that believes and obeys the truth, will obtain mercy; but no people need ever expect mercy, unless they believe, obey, know the truth, and keep it.

God foresaw that the Jews would reject Christ, but the Gentiles would receive him; therefore, according to his knowledge and the people's conduct, so the Lord wisely, justly and mercifully predetermined. So then, they who were not his, became his people, even his elected ecclesia! True and righteous is he, and so his works must be. The natural man, with his innate ideas, argues thus: As God is all-wise and all-powerful, why doth he suffer these evils to be done by men? Answer, God is goodness itself, and abhors moral evils, yet the scripture calls it his long forbearance, which proves man's freedom beyond contradiction. We should endeavour to understand the noble order of our creation and first situation. Man was created in the likeness, and holy image of God; and although we have departed from original order, we retain some likeness of our Maker, seeing we are intelligences. Were God to take

away our freedom of choice, he would break the order of our creation. Were our Lord to act absolutely, there could be no use for law and government. Man hath life and death set before him; blessing and cursing; and is directed to choose life, but is not forced into God's service.

CHAPTERS II, III.

BELIEVERS are quickened, who were dead in sin; were these the elect, or reprobates? Jews and Gentiles in Christ were all one; built upon the testimony of prophets and apostles. The apostle's prayer is, that christians may comprehend what the breadth, length, depth and height of pure christian religion is.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST, look at the union which ought to subsist in the church of God and Christ, viz. one body, united by one Spirit. To illustrate the above assertion, the Spirit that thus unites, is the Spirit that enlightens and draws us home to God, produceth the new birth, bears witness with the believer's spirit, and then seals him. Is this the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of Christ? If thou canst, tell. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; and there is but one Holy Spirit. Doth not the Arian's faith waver at this stumbling block? The apostle saith, one faith, that is, one pure faith, looking to Jesus as their one Lord God; a faith that works by love, purifies the heart, proves itself by a holy obedient life, and overcometh the world. This faith is accompanied with a comfortable hope of glory. There is also one baptism. Note; pure faith, a reasonable scripture hope, and divine love, are all essentials; we cannot be saved without these. Now, shall we consider water baptism in any mode to be essential? God forbid that we should so far be deceived. It is said the baptists have put away spiritual baptism altogether.

In this fourth chapter we read of our Lord's ascension to the highest heavens (from whence he descended), even to that exalted state of glory he had before the world was. Here men who mean well may stumble and be broken, by considering the Lord in glory as he was when weeping over

Jerusalem in the days of his flesh. O friendly reader, look on the two last verses of the 24th Psalm; fail not.

CHAPTERS V, VI.

THE few remarks necessary to be made on the close of this letter may be as follows, with a pressing exhortation to be close followers of God, as a family of dear loving children. Who can show the difference between the followers of God and the followers of Christ?

How shall we understand this saying, that he gave himself a sacrifice to God? Reader, take heed how you believe. It is written in the scriptures of truth, that Christ was put to death in the flesh; he bore our sins in *his own* body on the tree. His body. Paul? Who was *he* who gave *his* body? Moreover, who and where was that God to whom he made the sacrifice? Mind, reader, here are holy and interesting mysteries. It is written, God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. This was the Godhead of Christ, who reconciled the world to himself, by his own body. He purchased us with *his own* blood. So it stands unshaken, God and Christ are *one*, in spite of antichristian heresies. It behoved Christ to be like unto us men; therefore he possessed a body, a soul, which was the Deity or *Divino*; and his Spirit was and is the divine operation, that enlightens and quickens the believer's soul. Were his soul a human soul, its operation would never produce in us the new birth.

Read how pure the church must be before she enters into glory. No flesh spots; no worldly blemish; no wrinkles of a decay in the life of religion. Brother, if you believe these sacred truths, let us see your faith, &c.

Mark well how the apostle argues relative duties; read and obey them. O, how little these things are regarded. What shall we answer the Judge, when the books are opened? That duty of masters, servants, and slaves. If I should enter into the subject of slaves, it would swell to a history, and would lead me off my subject. This I will say, we are bound to do in every station of life, as we would be done by. We have but few sober minds in America, but sees, knows, and feels, that our negro slavery is as far from right, as a banditti of robbers are from honour and honesty. But the difficulty lies in the proper method of its extirpation. A christian, who is merciful to his slaves, perhaps is

not so criminal as he that is in the spirit of it. If any man wishes to see slavery opened to the light, let him read Thomas Clarkson's essay on Slavery. Do read it.

Paul closes his letter to the Ephesians with, Peace be to the brethren.

PHILIPPIANS.

THE Philippians were blessed and orderly christians; obedient to divine instructions, not only when Paul was with them, but more so when he was from them. Their faith and virtue was talked of, far and wide. This was a proof that the good Spirit worked in them; *their* work was to act from those divine impressions, in working out their salvation with awe, &c. Some christians say, where God begins a good work in the soul, he surely will finish it. This leaves the creature nothing to do; but the truth shows how man may begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh. Others may apologise, that as they are not religious they cannot begin a work of grace in their poor dead souls, and God hath not began it. To this impertinent speech we may answer, God has often knocked at your door for entrance, but you have refused and quenched the light, and resisted the Holy Spirit. God strives graciously, but not by force. What was done to the man who received a talent, but never improved it? He was cast into perdition!

The Philippians were kind to their ministers, who had no settled salaries. The conversation of christians should be such as adorns their profession. Paul had a desire to depart and be with Christ; which proves that the good soul, when it departs this life, ascends swiftly to Christ in glory. What a joy it is to holy ministers to see the holy brethren growing in grace. There is great consolation in Christ and society; there is great comfort in the life of love and christian fellowship. Paul taught the brethren to believe that the name of Jesus was above every name in heaven and on earth; and that all should bow the knee and worship the divine Saviour, the God Man!

The apostle warned the former brethren, and he warns us, to beware of false teachers. We have the blessed doc-

trine of perfection wrote by Paul, and the way to attain it. First, we must believe in the doctrine, and that we are bound to seek after it; or we shall not persevere, and of course must fall back. The way is, to follow after higher attainments of light, faith and love. But, nevertheless, you must walk by the same rule, mind the same thing, walk by faith in a holy obedient life. The rule you are to walk by is even the word of God. Turn neither to the right, nor to the left; ponder the path of thy feet, look straight before you; and by happy experience you will know, that your way will shine brighter and brighter to the perfect day. Will you seek after it?

Paul concluded his letter to his much beloved Philippians, as your author does to his brethren: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

COLOSSIANS.

Colosse was a city of Phrygia. This church was principally raised under the ministry of Epaphras, a faithful brother, who brought the glad tidings to Paul, who wrote to them this epistle, in which he styles them saints and faithful brethren in Christ. They heard, and we have heard, in the word of a pure gospel, of the pleasure and treasure laid up in heaven for such saints. So far as we understand, believe, experience and obey the apostle's writings, so far we are orthodox christians, independant of human traditions, marching on towards heaven.

In verses 13. &c. the doctrine of redemption is expressed in plain language. We have redemption (how?) through his blood. (what is it?) even the forgiveness of sins! Reader, do you understand this? Look here, the visible Christ was the express image, in beauty, purity, wisdom and power, of the invisible God. He is called the first-born of every creature, and the first-born from the dead; here, we suppose, it alludes to the resurrection. See the type in the days of yore; the first born son in a family had the pre-eminence, and acted as chaplain in the family: Esau sold his birth right, and he is called profane Esau! Christ is the creator of the creatures; they were created by him and

for him; and he is before all things. He was, by divine appointment, a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, which answered for Adam's justification, and of course atoned for the sin of the world. There could be no difference in the unborn race; else Adam's soul was in part elect, and the other part reprobate! Impossible!

Christ being the head of his church, therefore as the first-born, he must have the pre-eminence: for all divine fulness was in him. God called Ephraim his first-born, Jer. xxxi. 9. David is said to be the first-born of kings, Psal. lxxviii. 27. The christians were, and they still are, warned to take care of innovations, false doctrines, and vain philosophy, which corrupted the churches. Teachers who before were Jews, yet fond of their old ordinances, called the rudiments of the old church, as the first principles at the introducing of the gospel; such as Jewish baptisms, &c. Just look, Rom. vi. Jews and Gentiles were fond of old human traditions, even from Adam, who told his children, and children's children, long before Moses, concerning the fall and the promised seed. It went through so many unclean hands, that only a few dark ideas of truth remained; but they could add, and invent, which the philosophers of different nations did abundantly. Paul did not condemn true philosophy, for his mind was no stranger to it; but vain inventions. The philosophers of all nations had their notions, figures and allegories, concerning the Supreme; indeed they had some dark ideas of what is called a Trinity. By viewing the creation, they read the glorious attributes of Deus, by which they gave names to three invisible powers. To the great power they gave the name of *Oromazes*, Unknown. Some of them admitted another great one, who was expected as the desire of all nations, so called. Some supposed him to be a God, but not equal; him they called *Mythras*. Some thought *Mythras* was equal, eternal; others said no, but the production of his power. Others supposed *Mythras* was a middle God, for feeling, and believed to be an immaterial substance, and also a deity; his name was *Conductor*. Such were their gross absurdities. Others were wicked deceivers, who aimed at the downfall of Zion. Our apostle holds up Christ as our only one Lord God, and we are complete in him. Those who will follow the Gentile philosophers before the holy apostles, are as men bewitched.

Let us endeavour to understand how baptism succeeded circumcision. Note, the baptism of John decreased, and died at Pentecost; therefore is not the baptism of the new testament saints. Now, as christians, set your affections on things above, where Christ your life is; mortify the remains of carnal strugglings. We are fighting for life and liberty, and running for a prize. Keep that in view.

Look well to the 16th verse. See the apostle's rules of society, which were ordered to be read in all the churches. These rules we have, and need no other. The apostle closes his letter with pure instructions and prayer. Amen.



I. THESSALONIANS.

LET us make a few remarks on this first letter. It gives thanks to God for the conversion of so many infidels from idolatry to christianity. The apostle had great faith in that people. What a pleasure it is to a minister of Christ to see the Lord's people in sweet fellowship with God and each other, walking as becometh the gospel of Christ. Paul reminds them how they laboured with them by pure doctrines and holy examples, but with much contention.

The 14th verse, second chapter, should be noticed. The first christian church was planted in Jerusalem; and the faith and order of that church was the pattern for all the Gentile churches: for the law went out from Zion, and the word from Jerusalem.

Notice the 13th verse of the second chapter. These people received the word from the letters and from the lips of the preachers, not as the words of man, but as from God; and it had the desired effect. Read it, and try the experiment. O, what an open, gracious door for sinners, who by the sweet gospel are now invited in. As for christian brethren's loving each other, they were and are taught of God to love one another. Members of churches, how do you feel respecting this?

The sequel of this holy letter is instructive and delightful. The christians are told that it was their privilege to keep up such a lively witness, that in all times of trouble, trials, sorrows, &c. the lively hopes of heaven should ena-

ble them to rejoice evermore, with prayers and thanksgivings; for this was and is the will of God.

O, brother, hear the word of the Lord. First, pay proper attention to preaching. Secondly, receive no doctrine but what is according to godliness; and hold fast what is good. Thirdly, abstain from the appearance of evil; believe and be sanctified, body, soul, and spirit. The terms are laid down; the promise is sure. Good man, proceed accordingly: and when you attain to it, you will need no interpreter. The grace of Jesus Christ be with his people. Amen.



II. THESSALONIANS.

REMARKS on a few cardinal points in these three short chapters. First, Paul speaks well of this church in both letters; talks of their growing faith, and increasing love. Notice these things, christians, it is written to you, and all who may follow in succession, unto the end of time.

The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven in a grand and awful manner, in flames of fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the gospel. Vengeance is a just return for mere mockery and slighted mercy. This just fury will fall on gospel slighers, who despise the riches of his grace and his long forbearance. Reader, dost thou know God?

In the second chapter, it appears that some people were under an impression that the Lord would shortly appear; but the apostle told them, by the spirit of prophecy, that there would be a great falling away of the church before that day. Antichrist, the man of sin, would be made manifest, who should set himself at the head of Christ's church in the place of God, professing infallibility, granting indulgences, forgiving sins, &c. This was the full growth of episcopacy: therefore it is well known, that this great falling away of the church was in the days of bishops; and the pope in succession is an overgrown bishop, as the monstrous shark is the fulness of the dog fish. Popery happened several centuries after Paul's prophecy. Is all the blame to be imputed to the corrupt ministry, or partly to the laity? Note, Satan deceived Eve, but she was not there-

by exempt from punishment; neither was Adam. The church is ordered not to receive corrupt ministers, nor their doctrine. Stand fast, brethren, and withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly, that is, contrary to our directions. The scripture is order. See third chapter, verse 14. Here is discipline. The grace of the Lord be with you.



I. TIMOTHY.

CHAPTERS I, II.

OUR apostle directed and besought the itinerant minister to abide awhile in Ephesus, and to give the solemn charge to preachers to introduce no new doctrine, but the pure gospel as delivered by the apostles, what is called the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The faithful saying is, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Who is the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God? It is the Lord Jesus. O young men, called to the great work, war a good warfare; hold faith and a good conscience. This constitutes a christian; and the same can be held fast, or be put away, as some had done in the apostle's day. Dear preachers, keep a single eye, fight manfully, steer carefully. It is the will of God that the church should pray for all people, for all sorts and conditions of men; by reason, the Lord willeth all men to be saved, but not out of order. The Lord willeth that godly women should dress in modest apparel, modest looks; not with proud dressed hair, nor gold, nor costly array. A woman is not to assume the place of a public teacher, which is the elder's station. Notwithstanding she was the first sinner, and must pass through great bitterness in bearing children, God will save her in her deep distress, if she continues in the faith and lives a sober and holy life.

CHAPTERS III, IV.

If a man, a preacher, desires the office of an elder in the church from pure motives, he desireth a good work. Read his character. An office above a bresbyter was not known in those days, though some translators choose to call the

elders by that name sometimes for their purpose; they appeared after the golden days; but bishop and elder were all one. Elders should bear a spotless character, and be recommended by the church, because the church can receive or reject preachers, and those men must be in credit among respectable men without. Then let such be proved some time, as a preacher and christian, before ordination; let him arrive to a degree of knowledge above a novice, lest he be taken in the snare that the devil lays for preachers.

Then comes on the order of deacons. This is an honorable office, when properly elected by the laity, that is to say the church, and set apart by the hands of the presbytery, to act in the temporalities of the church, which requires holy honest men. When God calls a deacon to the ministry, let the people select another to act in his place. Let it be observed, that elders and deacons both act as stewards; and it is required of stewards to be faithful.

The 16th verse of the third chapter points out one of the greatest mysteries in the sacred records, viz. That the eternal God was declared, revealed to view, made manifest in the flesh as a person called Jesus Christ! It is the same as Emanuel, i. e. God with us. Let the reader dare to believe what his reason cannot fully comprehend.

The fourth chapter shows, from a former prophecy, the danger of departing from the pure faith, as foretold would come to pass in the latter day: which may be traced in the rise and progress of episcopacy, with the addition of human rules added to the sacred word; which corruption grew up to popery, as is well known; which opened a door for the man of sin, the great impostor, and also for the heretic Arius, &c. To deny the full divinity of Christ, is to destroy the atonement; and that overturns redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins! Such doctrine is heresy, or in plain terms, we judge it "the doctrine of devils!"

CHAPTERS IV, V, VI.

THE churches were troubled with vain disputers, of which the ministry is warned to take care, but cleave to the pure word, read, believe, obey, and teach it; and thereby, through grace, ministers may be saved, with their obedient hearers.

In the fifth chapter, the christian ministers are directed how to conduct themselves towards one another, and to all men. The aged and young, the elders in age and the elders in office, the young ministers must reprove where they see cause; but in this they must act just as the apostle directs; read it with due reverence and obedience.

The churches now are not burdened with widows, as in those former days: so we may pass that over. Christians are bound, by the gospel faith, to endeavour to provide for their families.

Chap. v. 10. Observe, pious old widows did wash the traveller's feet, who had walked through the scorching sands with his sandals on. Strange that men of understanding should adopt this as one of the ordinances of Christ's church! Our Lord condescended to wash the disciples' feet; the cause may be understood as follows: First, it may teach ministers to act as servants, and not as lords over his people. Secondly, this may serve as a sample for his people to show kindness one to another. Thirdly, it may answer as a figure of having our souls cleansed through the word. Finally, as water is only a figure, a small quantity is equal to much.

In the 17th verse, &c. we find a subject not well understood by us all, to wit, these two kinds of elders. We cannot find in the good book that the presbytery ever ordained any men by the imposition of hands, but elders and deacons; yet there were chief or principal men among the brethren, that is to say, among the lay members, to act and do business, called "helps," &c. leaders, yea, useful men. See Acts xv. 22, 23. From the best information we ever had, the elders there mentioned both grew out of the same root, viz. *senior*, elder; *seniority*, eldership, elders by age, and elders by office. Old desolate men, it seems, were supported out of the common stock; but labouring elders especially, who have given themselves up to the work, let them not suffer; muzzle not the ox that treadeth out the corn. But is there no provision made for the bishop? No! The way ministers were supported after their first public funds were exhausted, it appears, was by free donations; no law compulsion. The ministers had to learn contentment, even in adversity.

Towards the close of this chapter the apostle saith, be careful against partiality, and against hasty ordination.

Ministers were to ordain elders; but where is it written that elders were directed to ordain bishops over elders? The fountain cannot rise higher than the stream. Look over this thrice, then draw thy conclusion; which will be found thus, Apostle, Elder, and Deacon, whose office was to see about the temporalities of the church. Those deacons were the choice of the lay members, but ordained by the imposition of hands. Reader, notice; you read of bishop and deacon; but bishop, elder and deacon you never read of in the word. Here lies the priestcraft, as it is called.

The close of the third chapter gives a solemn charge to the ministers, how to behave themselves in the house of God, and how to preach Christ, even God, openly and plainly manifest in the flesh. If God be in the flesh of Christ, that flesh must be divine! Look at this again.

CHAPTERS IV, V, VI.

THE fourth chapter speaks prophetically of the mystery of iniquity, or the dreadful apostacy, in the departure of the church from the pure faith that was once delivered to the saints, which terminated in popery; the same issued from its root, episcopacy, as is well known; and if its root be unholy, so are its branches.

We enter the sixth chapter, and lo, it speaks of servants under the yoke, whether voluntary or by compulsion, if it be the law of the land, let the servants be subject, and not be guilty of sedition; and such as are deprived of their natural right, and hired servants whose wages are kept back, vengeance will be taken in some way, on the soul or body, except repentance prevent. An ignorant and inferior class of people are not the men to revolutionize a nation; and therefore, christian ministers will always teach servants or slaves to be subject, until Providence shall open a door whereby they may walk out in credit and safety.

The inspired Paul testifies that the love of money is the root, or main root, of all evil. The interpretation may be thus understood: The heart that is enveloped in the love of this world, and as money answers to the acquiring what the world can afford to the satisfaction of the flesh, therefore it is idolatry; and where the love of the world is rooted in the heart and affections, there the love of God is not. And as the love of God is the root of all good in a believer's

heart, as it is indeed the very nature of God, and draws his affections to things above, whereas the man of this world sets his affections on things below, therefore there is formed a striking contrast. O, man of God, flee these things, fight on, run and seize eternal life.

Chap. vi. 12, 13, 14. Here stands on record an awful, solemn charge on the ministers of the gospel, that they keep the holy commandment without spot, in regular succession, until the Master shall come. Verses 15, 16. Who is this great Potentate? Blessed, yea, King of kings, Lord of lords, yea, the *only* Potentate, who *only* hath immortality; who dwelleth in light that is not accessible to man, therefore it must be eternal increated light; he whom no man can see: to him be honour and power everlasting. Amen. The 14th and 15th verses testifies that this distinguished being is Jesus Christ; and if so, if he be not God Almighty, there can be no God. When this glory is revealed, Arius will shudder. See iv. 15, 16. The scriptures are full and complete.



II. TIMOTHY.

THIS letter abounds with excellent instructions to young Timothy; and all gospel preachers in succession. If Timothy had not the advantage of a classical education, he had the advantage of a religious education, by the precedency of his pious mothers, who taught him to read and understand the holy scriptures, a book but little used in our great schools. Alas! it is not strange that so many deists should issue out of colleges.

Ministers are charged to hold sound doctrine, with faith and love.

About this time there was a dreadful apostacy in Asia, occasioned by two preachers, who are named.

Verse 10. Paul declares his sufferings for the elect's sake, that they may obtain eternal salvation in glory. Thus it appears that the elect have no absolute assurance until they die in the Lord; but they possess a delightful hope in this life; and if faithful, no doubt faithful is he that promises, and will do it.

Young ministers have to study, pray, learn and improve on gifts and grace, until they become workmen who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, in speculative, experimental and practical divinity; not always feeding the sheep with milk, nor building up the church with a long-since finished salvation.

Reader, take notice; if we christians deny Christ, he will also deny us. Those who deny his God-head, indirectly deny him. God may wink at ignorance.

See verse 18. &c. To deny the resurrection of the body, is a fundamental error.

Chap. ii. 19. Observe, in scripture times the followers of Christ were called christians, which is a sacred name; therefore, those who name that name should abstain from the appearance of evil.

The religion of Christ is a revealed religion; we must all be taught of God. Man may be always learning, but never know the truth. Timothy's learning came through a pure channel, even by the letter and spirit of the gospel.

Chap. iv. 7, 8. We read the apostle's late testimony, that he had fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith; wherefore he had no doubt of his crown. The same is appointed for all who love the Lord's appearing. Reader, do you long to see him?

Friendly reader, you will see a solitary paragraph, after you finish the letter, respecting Timothy being the first ordained bishop, meaning an elder over elder. I hope you will not believe it, as not being wrote by the apostle. Be not offended. Ask the Greek scholar.



TITUS.

THIS short letter is not very mysterious, or hard to understand. This young man was converted under the ministry of Paul, and soon commenced an itinerant minister, in obedience to the commandment of God the Saviour. Therefore, Christ in God, is our Saviour. God out of Christ will save none: he is as flames of fire; it would be a fearful thing to fall into his hands. And Christ out of God can save none.

Therefore, as God hath joined both in one, let no man divide. In our Lord's coat there was no seam.

Titus was left awhile in Crete, to put things in order, as directed by the apostle. He who is called elder in the 5th verse, is called bishop in the 7th; thus you see they are not two orders. The making two orders of ministers, bishop over elder, is not of God; nor was the thing known when the church was under scripture government.

In the second chapter, we read of grace appearing, in the letter and by the spirit; and that is the grace producing salvation, for that teacheth every one to reform, come to, and follow the light; which men refuse to do, therefore neglect the great salvation; then how shall they escape divine wrath?

In the fourth chapter, God is called our kind Saviour.

Look at chap. ii. 14, &c. and pray for a redemption that purifies from all outward and secret faults; that we may be God's peculiar people. O, listen, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Chap. iii. 10. Here the church is directed how to treat the man that is a heretic. What shall we count heresy? To deny the Lord that bought us, is damnable heresy; and to own him as inferior to God, is very much like unto heresy. Reformed churches generally believe, that Arius and such like were surely heretics. Jews and philosophers corrupted the churches with fables and human commandments.

The letter to Titus concludes with love and prayer; but the solitary paragraph that appears, saying, Titus was first bishop of such a church, believe it not; it is not scripture.

PHILEMON.

PHILEMON was a dear christian brother, and friend to Paul. Onesimus absconded, or ran away in debt to his master. This servant was not in a state of involuntary slavery, as your black slaves are. This runaway seemed to be directed by Providence, that he heard Paul preach Jesus; he received the truth, and became a convert. The apostle advised him to return to his master, and take this letter with him, &c. &c.

HEBREWS.

CHAPTER I.

THE apostle introduces this letter, by pointing out the several ways in which the Lord formerly spake to his servants; but at length God spake to the world, both Jews and Gentiles, by the Lord; he spake by him who made all things; to whom he says, Thy throne, O God, &c. Jesus the Son was the brightness of the Father's glory. He formerly spake by Isaiah, the prophet, saying, "Lo, I come." This was Jesus, the Word, who came in a stream of emanation, even in streams of bright glory, from the bosom of the eternal Mind; who became clothed with a pure body of flesh, which was the Word made flesh, and was both human and divine. As the pure body grew up to perfect man, his Esse, or divine Soul, which was the eternal Life, by which the body existed, it filled up until the fulness of the Godhead was in the possession of the body of Christ bodily, and thus he became perfect God and man in one person. The Lord's Christ is Jehovah's person, and is the holy express image of Deity, all one incarnate. All that one hath the other is in possession of.

CHAPTERS II, III, IV.

THUS for a gracious purpose Jesus was made, or placed, in a state somewhat lower than the angels, for the purpose of redeeming a lost people by a painful and shameful death; and he, by the divine will and favour, tasted death for every man, to deliver them from the power of Satan and the slavish fear of death; and thus he condescended to sing praises in the midst of the church. Dear people, who enjoy such great liberties as the American citizens do, how will you escape eternal misery if you make light of so great salvation? It behoved Christ to be like unto his people, that he might be our merciful high-priest in things pertaining to God, respecting a reconciliation.

In the third chapter, there is a similitude drawn between Moses and the divine Saviour. Moses was charged to build the former church, called a house, exactly by the pattern

showed him on the mount. So Moses built the house, and acted in it according to the word, as a servant; but Christ built the new church according to the heavenly house above, and became master of it. The kingdom above is governed by the word of God, as recorded below, if an angel can be depended on, who said to John, I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus, and those who keep the sayings of this book. Rev. xxii. 8. The church in heaven and the church on earth are established on justice and judgment. Psalm lxxxix. Isaiah ix. Josephus called the scripture government a theocracy.

Here follows an exhortation that christians should be careful to guard against a hard heart, nor cast away their confidence, to beware of presumption and despair; lest they should fall as the Jews did. The danger of departing from the living God, is seen in the 12th verse.

The fourth chapter treats on the doctrine of the believer's rest. Rest is desirable only to the weary. The penitent burdened soul, who discovers no human probability to escape the pains of hell, his soul feels trouble and heaviness; he is called by the Word, which is the voice of the great Redeemer, to come to him by faith, nothing doubting, and the Lord will give him rest, by remitting all his sins, and giving him the witness of reconciliation and the consolation of Christ, with divine love shed abroad in his heart. Yet this rest is not so permanent as to be exempt from tribulation and various perplexities. In this corrupt and unfriendly world, the best of men must struggle through tribulation; but in Christ they feel peace. However, there remains a rest for the people of God, but not in this polluted world; for if the church takes her rest here, she will meet with a sore destruction. See Hosea. The Sabbath is a day of rest; the new dispensation is a rest from the heavy yoke of the former dispensation; but the rest in heaven is free from trouble, toil and pain. Friend, let us fear, lest a promise being left us of that rest, we should fall short of it, as the poor Jews did. When the word was not mixed with faith it did not profit. O, reader, labour hard for the meat that endures as long as your lives, and then rest for ever in glory. Remember well that this rest remains for the children of God, and them only.

CHAPTERS IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX.

Here the apostle introduces the priesthood of the great Redeemer. Reader, here comes on a very great mystery, which we are bound to believe, to wit, A man appeared in the days of yore, who dwelt in a place called Salem, which signifies peace. He was a priest and king; his name was Melchisedec; the very man who met Abraham when he was returning from the victory; whom Melchisedec accommodated with bread and wine; to whom Abraham paid tribute, which discovers that Abraham, though a patriarch, was inferior to this king of righteousness and peace. Melchisedec blessed Abraham; therefore the less must be blessed of the greater. Reader, observe that under the law the Levites received tithes from the people; but here it is said they paid tithes to this great priest, as being in the loins of Abraham at that time. According to this rule perfection was not under the old school-master, but the new. Thus the man Melchisedec was made by way of similitude like unto the Son of God, who abideth a priest continually. As it is written, Acts viii. 33. who shall declare his generation? so then, who shall declare the generation of Melchisedec? If any one can, let him. This Gentile priest was eternally intended for that purpose, and foretold by the prophet, saying, Thou (Christ) art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. Psalm cx. 4. Then, as touching the last eternal priesthood, it derived its authority from God directly, confirmed by an oath; therefore Jesus having no human father, nor with respect to his eternity, no mother; and as touching the Levitical priesthood, no father, no descent, neither the type, nor antetype; therefore, as Christ succeeds in the priesthood, it had no beginning of days nor end of life. So then, the new priesthood, with its gospel government, remains unchangeable. From hence the apostle expatiates largely; the Jewish priesthood being abolished by the great sacrifice of our divine High-priest, who has gone into the holy place, made without hands, eternal in the heavens; to whom we have access by a new and living way, &c. The latter is called the new covenant, or testament. See the ninth chapter, 16, 17. Here it shows that a will is not in force until the death of the testator. Then why do men

presumptuously assert that John the baptist administered the christian baptism?

CHAPTERS X, XI, XII.

IN the tenth chapter, we read of one, saying, as legal sacrifices will not answer to take away sin, then said I, "Lo, I come." Verse 5. "But a body hast thou prepared me." Every reader is hereby requested to take the following question into serious consideration, viz. Who is this that saith, "Lo, *I* come," and "a body hast thou prepared *for me*." Who is this *I* and *me*? In chap. x. 20. this prepared body is said to be a vail, to cover whatever is within that vail. Now, reader, perhaps you will come at it. If this vail be the humanity, that within is, what? Is it a human soul like ours, or is it his divinity? Work it.

There is a doctrine contained in the sixth and tenth chapters respecting total apostacy: let it be examined. It reads as follows: It is impossible for those once enlightened, and who have tasted the heavenly gift, the good word of God, and the Holy Ghost, yea, felt the powers of the world to come; if they fall away it will be impossible to renew them again (the second time) to repentance, &c. If we (christians) sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. If they who despised Moses's law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; how shall we, who possess the name, and after that fall away so far as to despise his covenant, his laws, his name, and blood, ever be renewed, seeing we have despised the blood of the covenant, and, as it were, crucified the Lord afresh, and brought a public scandal on Christ's cause. Notice the character, having received the knowledge of the truth; having the understanding thus enlightened, the passions so affected as to taste the good word, and received the holy Spirit as a heavenly gift; moreover, to feel the powers of the world to come (being the gospel age), to feel its power as is recorded in the first chapter to the Romans, at the 16th verse, I am not ashamed of the gospel, seeing it is the power of God to salvation—to believers it is impossible to renew a soul when the Spirit leaves him. O, christians of every church, suffer not yourselves to be deceived; be not high-minded,

but fear. Let the downfall of the Jews, and members of ruined christian churches, convince you of the danger of turning back to folly, and from that to perdition. If preachers will not be saved; let the awful texts, and these friendly lines, be seriously noticed by the lay members.

Chapter x. 24. Let the followers of our Lord pay attention to the divine orders, feel for each united member, meet together as oft as you conveniently can, and in these select meetings converse, sing, and pray. Reader, will you do so? Read Malachi, iii. 16, &c. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye follow and do them.

Verse 15. Now the man that is justified by faith, he continues to keep alive to God by faith, to the saving of his soul; but if any one draw back, Christ's soul, or spirit, will have no pleasure in him. Never forget this axiom, Faith without works is dead.

Read on about the cloud of witnesses; let us be fully persuaded of the certainty, and put by all unnecessary weights, and beware of your most besetting sin; if you find you are too easily overcome by it, make no common use of it, at your peril. Had you tried an enemy four times and you were overcome each time, would it not be your wisdom to let him alone? See verse 9. God is the Father of our spirits.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE church is ordered to be subject to the apostles, who ruled and governed the churches by their sacred writings, which came from God through a pure channel; for they had the key of the kingdom; therefore, that which they bound on earth, was, and is, bound in heaven. But since the apostles, the churches are charged to prove us and our doctrine, and search the royal body of divinity; and all the truth to hold fast and improve, but cast the bad away. So far as preachers preach and teach the truth, people are bound to obey, but no farther, neither their doctrines nor discipline; else you would be obeying men.

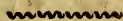
Pay attention to the eighth verse. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; that is to say, the same immutable, unalterable; the same before time, in time, and for ever. Amen.

JAMES.

THE apostle James styles himself a servant of God, and the Lord Jesus. He mentions God and Christ, himself the servant; yet but one law-giver, iv. 12; and he is able to save and to destroy. Read it over again. Therefore, the pure apostolic church had no rules to bind her members but the holy laws of Christ, recorded in the sacred book. In this letter, as first addressed to the Jewish christians, and then to the world, he urges the christians to exercise patience, yea, let it have its perfect work. He teaches the Lord's people to beware of covetousness, and partiality, by honouring the rich and despising the poor; saying, do not rich men oppress you, yea, and blaspheme that worthy name by which you are called? All who speak insulting language against Christ, his church, or the name christian, it appears, are guilty of the crime of blasphemy. This sets the name of Christ higher than the heavens. The author solicits the serious attention of those who falsely call themselves christians (perhaps to keep off reproach), yet deny that Christ is their God. Examine, friends, are you not bordering on blasphemy? This man of God brings the rich brother and the poor brother to a religious level, by reducing one and exalting the other. He enforces good works as the sure proof of a pure active faith; that we must be doers, as well as hearers, else we (not the devil) deceive ourselves. As faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, and that also through the divine operations of the Spirit; but not irresistibly, ministers should be careful to preach pure doctrine. Corrupt doctrine begets its own likeness; and this causes so many faiths, and so little pure and undefiled religion. Pure doctrine, from a pure heart and a holy life, like an outside garment unspotted from the world; this, and only this, will stand approved before God. The gospel law is a "royal law;" how superior to our minister home-made laws. It is a perfect law; a holy man obeys it in his soul with delight and perfect desire; and his infirmities do not condemn, by reason of intercession. But he that walks by a crooked rule, will never make straight paths for his feet, which causeth his followers to be deemed crooked disciples. The christian govern-

ment is the law of liberty, as touching the ceremonial law. The tongue is compared to an unruly horse, that must be governed by a curb bridle; he that bridleth his tongue, may govern the other members. Professors may talk too much, when not profitable for body nor soul: sometimes they bless, and sometimes they curse, and swear; not after the vulgar swearing, but to wish evil on a person is a curse; to bind what you report by any thing that is in heaven or on earth in common conversation, is swearing; when necessity calls for a solemn declaration, or before a magistrate, it is a different case.

The apostle utters dreadful woes against the rich oppressors; as also misers, who hold back from the labourers what is their just due; but as the times are precarious, or rather dangerous, moreover what cannot be cured we will try to endure; therefore the author entreats such characters, if they think they are justifiable before God, to contend with the inspired apostle, chapter v. The author's friendly council is, gentlemen, God is no respecter of persons, in point of equal justice; consider your ways, love your soul, love your wives and children, yea, feel for future generations, direct your highest rulers to call for all, and collect the wisdom of America to form a plan that may destroy none, and save our dear nation. Tears are collecting, and the author, who is your weeping friend, drops the subject.



I. PETER.

LET us now attend to the writings of that great apostle and martyr, whose name is Peter. His first general letter, after his salutation, gives us to understand how election cometh, and when. We are elected according to foreknowledge; first to the Jews in this day; and in the appointed time and order of things, many were elected when they obeyed the truth, and felt the sanctifying influence of the Spirit, and the virtue of the sprinkled blood, with grace, peace, &c. This doctrine appears plain and pure.

Verse 3. &c. The power by which we are born of God, is the power of Christ's resurrection; and we are here told what a glorious inheritance we are born to, if our faith

continues pure, by which we may overcome the world, and by the power of grace we can endure to the end. The apostle exhorts and comforts the people of God.

In the 11th and 12th verses we hear that the Spirit of Christ inspired the prophets, as also the apostles.

Let the 15th verse be observed. Why christians should be holy is, because they are called by the Holy One.

Reader, do notice the 22d verse. Seeing you have purified your souls by obeying the truth, &c. unto unfeigned love of the brethren. Read what follows, and obey.

In the last verse of this first chapter, we are told that the word of the Lord endureth for ever; therefore, keep to the sure side, hold to the word for safety as to faith and government.

The second chapter is plain instruction, as is also the third until we come to the 19th verse. The apostle aims to establish the christians in the belief, that there is but one Holy Spirit, but many operations, and these operations are from Christ; and it was Christ in the Spirit, that went and preached by Noah before the flood, to the wicked souls in prison. Christ's was the spirit, and that was the life he laid down and took up again. When was this? Perhaps near two thousand years before the man Christ was crucified; when the long forbearance of God waited in the days of Noah. Could those be the predestinated elects, or reprobates, that he bore with so long? That all wicked sinners, as touching their souls, are shut up in darkness, under the power of sin and unbelief, in the bonds of iniquity, under divine sentence of eternal death; and such prisoners, by the same divine Spirit that preached by Noah, were preached to by Isaiah, xlix. Say to the prisoners, Go forth. Compare lxi. 1. Zechariah ix 11, &c.

The fourth chapter is mostly an exhortation to a self-denying, holy life of love, kindness, patience, &c. And if they were hated because they loved and bore the name of christian, let them not be ashamed, for Christ on your part is glorified, and the good Spirit resteth on you. Commit to him the keeping of your souls. O, saint and sinner, consider the 18th verse; read it in the good letter.

In the fifth and last chapter in the first letter, the apostle exhorts preachers, under the appellation of elders, as ruling, active men, but not lords over God's people. He called himself an elder, and an apostle also; men appoint-